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The forgotten workforce: clerical and administrative staff within British Higher  
Education

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the employment conditions for clerical and administrative staff within the British Higher Education Sector. For this analysis a national questionnaire was distributed and 747 responses were returned and analysed. In order to further enrich the qualitative research data, 30 interviews were also conducted, mainly with clerical and secretarial staff but also with management staff who had progressed from clerical grades.

The main focus of the research was to examine inequalities within the higher education sector that impinge particularly on the clerical and administrative workforce. The thesis develops an analytic framework based on dual systems theory to show how clerical occupations have developed into highly segregated female-dominated occupations. The dual influences of capitalism and patriarchy in the development of female disadvantage is illustrated in the historical sections of the thesis. Inequality regimes which operate within hierarchical organisations such as universities are then used to explain how these class- and gender-based disadvantages are replicated and reinforced through organisational structures and processes.

The conclusions drawn by the thesis demonstrate that class and gender discrimination is entrenched within the British Higher Education system. This institutionalised discrimination continues to work to the disadvantage of women in all occupational groups across the sector. However, clerical and administrative staff, as a predominately female



group of workers, are particularly vulnerable to inequalities and lack of opportunities, both because of their gender and also their class position within the organisational hierarchy.

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## **Abbreviations**

APEX	Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff
ASTMS	Association of Scientific, Technical and Management Staffs
AWCS	Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries
BIFU	Banking, Insurance and Supervisory Union
COHSE	Confederation of Health Service Employees
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
LCC	London Chamber of Commerce
MATSU	Managerial, Administrative, Technical and Supervisory Association
NALGO Officers	National Association of Local Government
NUC	National Union of Clerks
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees
NUR	National Union of Railwaymen
RCA	Railway Clerks Association
SPEW	Society for Promoting the Employment of Women
TASS	Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
TUC	Trade Union Council
UCU	University and College Union
USDAW	Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

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## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

In the last fifty years the position of universities within British society has been transformed (Anderson, 2006:vii). For centuries higher education served a small social elite and even in the 1950s only 1 in 25 benefited from a university education (ibid:vii). Now the participation rate is approaching 1 in 2 and the number of universities has grown from a small handful to over 90 (ibid:vii). Likewise the position of women in the workforce has been transformed. Equality legislation that began with the Equal Pay Act in 1970 has continued throughout the twentieth century and the increased role of women in paid work has been one of the most sustained and significant economic trends of the second half of the twentieth century' (Connolly and Gregory, 2007:142).

In universities, as in the economy as a whole, employment patterns are very different for men and women. The higher education workforce remains highly segregated, both horizontally and vertically, and the gender pay gap persists for all grades of staff (Smith, 2009:626). The inequalities in academic salaries and management salaries have, of course, not gone un-noticed by academics, researchers and the academic trade union (UCU). There has also been considerable academic research both nationally and internationally that has raised the inequality of opportunity for female academic staff (Lie and O'Leary:1990; Brooks and Mackinnon: 2001). Women's opportunities in academic careers cannot however be addressed in a vacuum (Finch, 2003:133). The prospects for women in academia have to be seen as part of the bigger picture and a university which is content to see all its secretaries as women with an unbreakable class ceiling is unlikely to be able to progress towards greater gender equality (ibid:134). However, there is little evidence that this bigger picture has been considered. The phenomena of horizontal segregation within the sector has been largely over-looked and there has been relatively

little attention paid to the 'increasingly diverse contributions of staff who work as librarians, information scientists and technologists, teaching and research assistants, demonstrators, instructors, technicians, course managers, departmental administrators, accountants, surveyors, personnel officers, porters, cleaners, kitchen assistants and a host of other administrative, technical, clerical and manual roles' (Cuthbert, 1996:13). Academic research has concentrated on the careers of academic posts and there have been few discussions about the careers of administrators and other workers who are principally concerned with the 'well-being, coordination and regulation of the whole institution' (Middlehurst, 1993:109).

It is the aim of this research to begin to correct this and to examine the development and maintenance of segregation and gender and class inequalities within British higher education from the perspective of the most gender segregated group of workers in the sector, that of clerical and administrative staff.

## **1.1 Theoretical Perspective**

Considerable time was set aside to develop the theoretical framework for the research. A number of labour market theories, based on neo-classical and Marxist analyses were considered and subsequently discounted as insufficient to explain the specific position of women in the labour market. Feminist theories were then considered and their development examined in some details. Although not always easy to categorise, feminist theory is not a monolithic ideology and not all feminists think alike (Tong, 2009:1). This was recognised by discussing the development of the different strands of feminist theory during the latter part of the Twentieth century, including radical feminism and Marxist/socialist feminism. Dual systems theory was proposed as the theoretical

framework which best explained how patriarchy and capitalism acted 'as two separate structures with mutual effects' (Walby, 1986:45). The history of clerical work clearly shows how these two structures disadvantaged women and resulted in an occupation divided by both class and gender. The subsequent inequalities that result from this divided workforce are then maintained and replicated by inequality regimes (Acker, 2006). The thesis examines how these inequality regimes work within higher education to ensure gender and class stability across and within organisations.

## **1.2 British Higher Education**

As previously discussed, British universities have segregated and unequal employment patterns that mirror the British workforce as a whole. Within the British economy in November 2012, 73.2 per cent of men and 69.5 per cent of women were in employment (Office for National Statistics, 2013). 11.2 million of men worked full-time compared to 7.02 million women, and 1.4 million men worked part-time compared to 5.2 million women (Office of National Statistics, 2013). The labour market also remains highly segregated with women concentrated in personal and caring services (84% female); administrative and office work (78% female); and sales and customer service (68% female), whilst considerably less concentrated in management and senior officers (35% female) and skilled trades (9% female) (Office for National Statistics, 2013). In higher education, 53 per cent of the 381,785 employees within the British Universities are female (HESA, 2012:Table A). However, patterns of segregation replicate those found in the general work population with women underrepresented in, for example, technical roles which are 71 per cent male, and over-represented in administrative and clerical roles which are 84 per cent female (ibid). Women also account for 67 per cent of the part-time workers across the sector (ibid) but are under-represented in the higher grades.



Gender and class disadvantage within the sector is a long-standing issue as universities have a long history of gender and class bias.

‘Universities have traditionally been spaces where men are constituted as powerful subjects defining what, and who, is worth knowing’. (Quinn, 2003:1).

Quinn goes on to describe universities as ‘cloistered communities, privileged and discrete with shared values and priorities, where arcane codes delineated who belonged and who did not’ (Quinn, 2003:1). Certainly universities have traditionally been bastions of masculinity which actively excluded and discouraged the admittance of women until the late nineteenth century and then against stringent opposition:

‘Not that we wish in any way to appear unchivalrous or to minimise the good work often done by women students but ‘so long as the moon and sun endureth’ Cambridge should remain a society for men’ (Cambridge Review, 1919 quoted in Quinn, 2003:1).

London University was the first English University to allow female students by permitting them to attend lectures at King’s and University College in 1828 (Bartley, 1996:43). There then followed a steady expansion, mainly by the creation of women’s only colleges such as Hitchin (later Girton) College, Cambridge (established 1869) and Somerville College and Lady Margaret Hall (1879) in Oxford (Bartley, 1996:43). However, although women had been reluctantly let through the doors of the universities, it was to be a long time before they attained equality either in number or in treatment. Cambridge refused to award women degrees until 1948 and it was not until 1959 that women’s halls at Oxford became fully incorporated into the University (Robinson, 2009:xxiii). Class bias is also entrenched with the history of universities. Although the University of Cambridge has admitted undergraduates at its Kings College since 1317, it was not until 1865 that non-

Etonians were granted entrance (Anderson, 2006:3). Likewise, in 1800 it was reported that there were few students from poorer backgrounds attending university and when they did they were required to wait on the richer students (ibid:23). Even today students from working-class backgrounds are under-represented in the higher status, older universities (Reay, 2012:2)

It is unsurprising, given the reluctance of universities to admit women that growth in female undergraduate numbers was initially slow. In 1899 only 15 per cent of undergraduates were female (Robinson, 2009:xxii). By 1939 less than one quarter of undergraduates were female and when they graduated they were still encouraged to choose between a profession and marriage (Robinson, 2009:xxiii). By 1965 women still only accounted for 27.7 per cent of undergraduates and by 1981 39.8 per cent (Tight, 2009:257). It is only in the last 10- 20 years that women have seen their numbers at university soar. The most recent HESA statistics for 2010-11 figures show that 55 per cent of undergraduate and 50 per cent of postgraduate students were female (HESA, 2012).

Likewise, women's entrance into academic occupations was also a slow process. As late as 1989 women accounted for just 25 per cent of UK academics (Lie and O'Leary, 1990:21). In the 2010-2011 academic year 45 per cent of academics were female (HESA, 2012: Table B). A consequence of this delayed access could be seen as limiting the effect women might have on the development of the modern university with their needs for acceptance within the existing structures curtailing their ability to influence evolving ones (Halverson, 2002:348). Therefore a gender hierarchy persists within the academy that affects all female employees, for example, just under 20 per cent of

professors are female and 77 per cent of academic staff who earn over £55,758 are male (HESA, 2012: Table B). However, it could be argued that while female academic staff have been making some inroads into the male dominated academy (in 1987/88 only 3 per cent of professors were female) (Lie and O'Leary, 1990:19), the position of administrative and clerical staff has stagnated. They are doubly disadvantaged as administrative and clerical staff who, as well as being largely female, also fall victim to the 'long history of status hierarchy' that persists across the university sector' (Eveline, 2004:137).

There is a however tendency to think of equal opportunities as only relevant to academic staff. This is described by Castleman and Allen as a 'blind spot' which mirrors the neglect of general (i.e. support) staff within higher education as a whole (Castleman and Allen, 1995:69). In 1990 the Hansard Committee reported:

"It is wholly unacceptable that the centres of modern academic teaching and excellence in Britain should remain bastions of male power and privilege". (Hansard Society Commission, 1990:11).

Subsequently the Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals published guidelines on equal opportunities and established a Commission on University Career Opportunities (Brown, 1997:109). There have also been a number of other initiatives such as the 'Through the Glass Ceiling' network for women managers in higher education (King, 1997:93) and more recently the well promoted Athena Swan Charter which:

“recognises and celebrates good employment practice for women working in science, engineering and technology in higher education and research”. (Athena Swan, 2012).

Although these initiatives are clearly much needed, they exclude a good proportion of the higher education workforce. Table 1.1 clearly shows that the occupation with the highest gender segregation is secretaries, typist, clerks and general assistants which is 92 per cent female. If combined with the similar category of library assistants, clerks and general administrative assistants the female participation rate is still very high at 85 per cent. This is higher than in the general economy where women account for 77 per cent of administrative and administrative employees (Office for National Statistics, 2013).

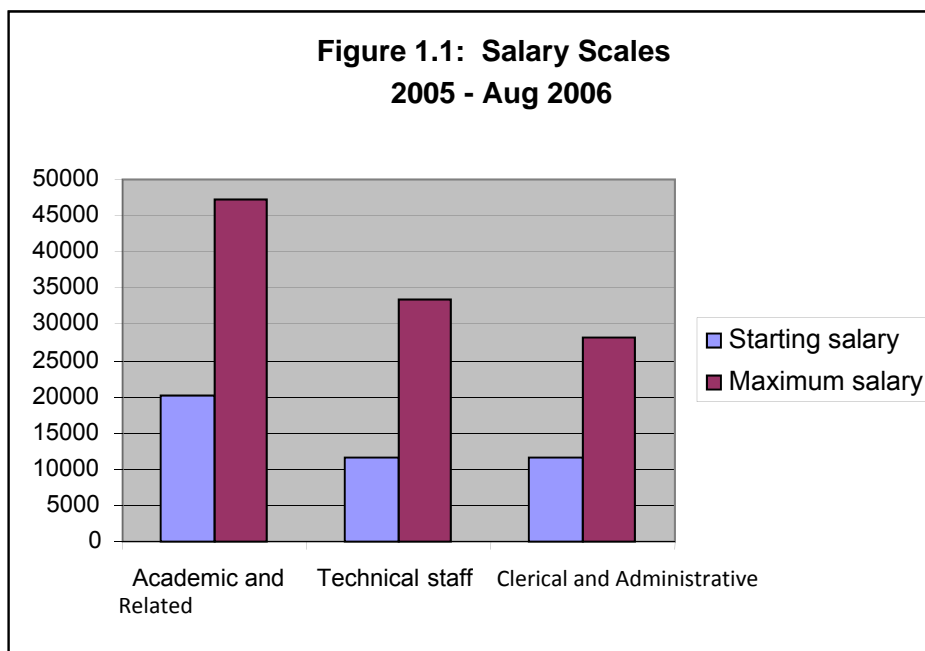
**Table1.1: Higher Education staff by activity, mode of employment and gender, 2010-2011**

	Full-time		Part-time		Total	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Secretaries, typists, clerks and general assistants	92%	8%	92%	8%	92%	8%
Library assistants, clerks and general administrative assistants	76%	24%	82%	18%	78%	22%
Student welfare workers, careers advisors, vocational training instructors, personnel and planning officers	69%	31%	80%	20%	73%	27%
Retail and customer service occupations	64%	36%	80%	20%	72%	28%
Artistic, media, public relations, marketing and sports assistants	57%	43%	74%	26%	61%	39%
Non-academic professionals	53%	47%	55%	45%	58%	42%
Cleaners, catering assistant, security officers, porters and maintenance workers.	27%	73%	76%	24%	58%	42%

Managers	49%	51%	80%	20%	52%	48%
Caretakers, residential wardens, sports and leisure attendant, nursery nurses and care occupations	76%	24%	62%	38%	52%	48%
Academic professionals	39%	61%	55%	45%	44%	56%
Laboratory, engineering, building, IT and medical technicians (Including nurses)	29%	71%	67%	33%	35%	65%
Drivers, maintenance supervisors and plant operatives	12%	88%	49%	51%	18%	82%
Chefs, gardeners, electrical and construction trades, mechanical fitters and printers	12%	88%	56%	44%	15%	85%

Source: HESA, 2012:Table A

It has been generally accepted that this segregation of women into jobs defined as 'low skilled and low paid' is one of the major features of the much publicised gender pay gap (Olsen and Walby, 2004:20). At the start of this research across higher education different salary structures were in place for different categories of staff. Table 1.2 illustrates how the highest salaries at a UK University were lower on the female dominated administrative and clerical salary spine thus limiting the earnings potential for this category of staff:



**Source: UK University (2006)**

Within this structure it was clear that the pay of the women who constituted 91 per cent of the clerical and administrative staff were not just limited by the limitations of their specific pay spine but also by their positioning on the spine. 70 per cent of were on spine point 3 or below, earning a maximum of £18,370 with automatic progression capped at £16,837. Only 10% were on salary points 4 and 5 where they could expect to earn between £19,204 and £28,204. The closest allies to this group in terms of pay structures and conditions of employment are those on technical grades of whom 84% are male. 57 per cent of the technical staff were on higher grades, Technical Grade E, earning over £20,202.

Within Higher Education few would deny the importance of clerical and administrative staff whose work underpins all areas of academia, supporting teaching, research and all central support functions, including an increasing but informal role in student support and pastoral care. However, although there have been massive changes within the sector over the past few years, with associated changes in the role of the 'secretary', the evaluation of the

payment for this type of work has not substantially changed. The invisibility of this sector of staff makes it difficult to quantify such changes as the Higher Education Statistics Agency did not collect data on support staff until 2004, and very little published research is available. Of the few pieces of published work available University support staff have been described as “underpaid and overlooked” (Atkinson, 2001:1) or “like servants in a Victorian household” (Kelly and Leicester, 1996:108). Although equal opportunities are high on the agenda within HE institutes, the focus is mainly confined to gender disparities of pay between male and female academic staff. Atkinson claims that universities have “a history that is yet to be shed: an endemic, institutionalized base of sexism, racism, class snobbery and intellectual elitism” (Atkinson, 2001:1). This research aims to examine some of these themes in the light of the changes within the sector but specifically how they affect clerical and administrative workers rather than academic staff. The research looks specifically at the top two categories presented in Table 1.1, referred to within this research as clerical and administrative staff. It is a much neglected area that will contribute to the academic debate on gender equality and the treatment and prospects of low paid women across the workplace as a whole.

#### **1.4 Organisation of the Thesis**

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 2 analyses and discusses the theory around the unequal treatment of women within the workplace. The Chapter is sub-divided into further sections, each of which considers the major theories on women’s labour market position. Firstly, the neo-classical approach is considered and largely discarded because of its failure to consider power relationships within society (Hyman, 1989:227) and its neglect of patriarchal structures within the workplace and society (Walby, 1986:72-73).

Labour market segmentation theories are then considered. These theories also rely on neo-classical logic (Anker, 1997:321-322). The main theories focus on internal labour markets (Doeringer and Piore, 1971); and dual labour markets (Barron and Norris, 1976). However, although these theories may provide a snap-shot of labour market structures at the time of their writing, they do not provide adequate explanation as to why women are concentrated into certain occupations and job markets (Beechey, 1986:111-112).

The next section provides an over-view of the Marxist analysis of labour markets. Marxism provides a very useful account of the development of labour markets under capitalism. However, again, it fails to address why it is women who become concentrated in the poorer paid, secondary markets. This was recognized by the second-wave feminists of the 1970s who developed the concept of patriarchy to explain why women were at a disadvantage in the workplace and in society as a whole. This is the focus of fifth section with this Chapter and, via an analysis of the different strands of feminism, brings us to the concept of dual systems theory. Dual systems theory recognizes capitalism and patriarchy as two separate structures with mutual effects (Walby, 1986:45). The development of clerical work as a female occupation clearly shows how capitalism and patriarchy disadvantaged women and gave rise to the highly segregated workforce that persists today. Finally, gender regimes (Walby, 1997) and inequality regimes (Acker, 2006) are analysed and offered as an explanation for the continuing disadvantage of women within the labour market.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methods used, the aims of the research strategy and the limitations and advantages of the research methods chosen. The use of feminist research philosophy is described and explained as is the use of a triangulation of research



methods in order to provide both macro and micro data. The methods used were designed to obtain the maximum information possible about a previously under researched group. These included a national survey of UNISON members within higher education and interviews with employees and managers. Documentary evidence, both primary and secondary, provided a detailed history of clerical work and also some background to the development of the research group. The multiple research methods employed are designed to minimise bias within the research and to provide the richest data sources possible given the resources available.

Chapter 4 is the first of two history chapters which discusses the development of clerical work as an occupation. This first chapter looks at the early origins of the occupation and charts and analyses the changes up until the Second World War. It examines the growth of the occupation as a middle-class male occupation and shows how the job began to change in the 1920s and 1930s to become feminised, and some would argue, proletarianised into a working class occupation. The chapter also shows how capitalist and patriarchal forces effectively divided clerical work into male and female jobs in order to pacify the employer's desire for cheap female labour as well as protecting the better paid jobs for the men. Considerable consideration is also given to the early clerical trade unions, especially the role of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries.

Chapter 5 looks at the history of clerical work from the 1950s up until the present day. This chapter is divided into themes and considers the structural changes within the workforce, the development of the clerical workforce through the latter part of the Twentieth Century; the impact of technology on the clerical workforce and the development of clerical trade unionism both in the public and private sector. TUC records

from the 1960s and 1970s pertaining to the early development of trade unionism within the higher education clerical and administrative workforce are also included.

Chapter 6 is the first of three chapters which examines and analyses the fieldwork. The fieldwork is analysed by themes and the first theme looks at work organization within the group, specifically at the gender segregation of the group and the subsequent devaluation of the skills of the occupation. The class divide between support staff and academic staff is also considered and how class inequalities reinforce the segregation of the workforce, both physically and metaphorically. Survey and interview evidence is presented and discussed in order to fully understand how this segregation impacts on workers and the evaluation of the skills of the job. Although there are relatively few men in this research group, evidence suggests that generally the outcomes in terms of salary levels for these men tends to be better than those of many women. This is considered in light of the skills debate and how the analysis of skills as 'male' or 'female' disadvantages women who systematically fail to obtain recognition for many of their duties as they are simply considered to be natural feminine traits (Davies and Rosser, 1986:103). The particular ghettoisation and further disadvantage of part-time staff is also considered here.

Chapter 7 is the second chapter which analyses the field research. This chapter focuses on inequalities in the treatment of this group over a range of issues including flexible working arrangements, annual leave and pension provision. Access to promotions and staff development opportunities are also considered and the inequalities experienced by this group of staff are highlighted. The working environment is also considered and issues of job losses and restructuring exercises which seem to disproportionately affect this group are also examined. Again, the particular issues of part-time staff are also

considered. The chapter discusses how different inequality regimes synonymous with hierarchical organisations such as universities, operate to ensure that women remain disadvantaged within these organisations.

Chapter 8 examines pay and rewards for this group of staff. Again, using background evidence and the results of the survey and interviews, this chapter discusses how pay is negotiated nationally but focuses more specifically on the barriers to obtaining local rewards and promotions. Comparisons are made to male and female pay and attempts are made to rationalize the discrepancies between them, including an analysis of qualification and length of service. This chapter also examines the subjects' perceptions of their pay and what they perceive to be the problems in raising their salaries.

Finally Chapter 9 is the conclusion and this offers an explanation for the research observations and concludes that this group of women, like many other across the economy, are the victims of institutionalised discrimination which has become embedded within their organisations over a number of years. Described by Acker as inequality regimes (Acker, 2006:109a) the continued disadvantage of groups of predominately female workers is reinforced in a variety of ways. These include the organising processes and practices that maintain and reproduce inequalities, the invisibility of inequalities, the legitimacy and ideologies of inequalities, controls and compliance and competing interests and organisational change (Acker, 2006:110a). All these factors can be seen operating within higher education to maintain organisational hierarchies based on gender and class. Clerical and administrative staff have been, and continue to be, particularly disadvantaged by their position within the organisational hierarchy as a predominately female group of staff who are seen as 'inferior' to academic staff, managers and even technical staff within their organisations. This leads to invisibility within the organisational structure.

Largely excluded from equal opportunity initiatives reserved for academic staff and in the decision making of the organisation based on gender and class based assumptions on their abilities and skills, this group of workers have seen scant attention paid to their changing role within the sector. They really are the forgotten workforce.

## **Chapter 2 - Theories on Women's Position in the Labour Market**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous (introductory) chapter set out the labour market position of women today and more specifically the position of this research group. The aim of this chapter is to offer some explanation as to why women are congregated into certain occupations such as this research group and why these occupations are subsequently of lower pay and status than others across the economy. The reasons why women are lower paid and segregated into certain occupations where their skills are undervalued are complex. No one theory of gender inequality has proved entirely satisfactory and this chapter will not redress this. However, there are many theories that seek to explain women's disadvantaged position within the workplace. All have their relative merits and shortcomings and it is the aim of this chapter to review and analyse the literature available on gender inequality with a view to offering some explanations of the phenomena of segregation and low pay.

The persistence of occupational segregation has been used to explain the fact that the earnings of women are below those of men in spite of equal pay legislation (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990:25). Although the job market is not as segregated as it was, as women enter occupations and industries from which they were previously under-represented, such as management and the professions, they are still disproportionately concentrated into lower paid occupations, especially part-time work (Connelly and Gregory, 2009:156). This obviously has equality implications, especially in pay outcomes. It has been identified that wages are 1.3% higher for every 10 per cent of men in a particular occupation (Olsen and Walby, 2004:12). However, merely to accept that segregation lowers the earnings potential of a good proportion of women is not acceptable. It is

necessary to look at why women became segregated into the lower paid occupations and why 'female' occupations remain lower paid and are perceived as lower status than those with a predominance of men.

Many of the theories of gender segregation and discrimination are historical in nature and at first analysis seem to have little bearing on women's position in the western labour market today. However, it is important that they are examined, as they have all, to a greater or lesser extent, had an important bearing on the development of theory in this area.

For the purpose of this analysis broad categories have been applied to the many theories of labour market discrimination, neo-classical analysis, Marxist analysis and feminist analyses. Consideration will also be given to theories which do not sit comfortably into any of these categories. For example, of particular importance to this research is the recognition of the value of female skills and women's historical lack of power to insist upon recognition of these skills (Barrett, 1980:162-166). Finally, the maintenance of inequalities via gender regimes (Walby, 1997) and inequality regimens (Acker, 2006) will be examined and considered.

## **2.2 Neoclassical Human Capital Analysis**

Neo-classical economics focuses on consumption and exchange of goods and services (Sawyer, 1989:39). Social and political influences are not considered, the focus being on the individual consumer and the marginal product of labour (Michie et al, 2002:351). Neoclassical analysis focuses firmly on supply and demand with an emphasis on human

capital theory which attempts to explain women's position within the labour market in terms of their lesser human capital, largely discounting the possibility that discrimination could influence the position of women at work. The primary analytical category in neoclassical theory is the individual and the assumption that individuals exercise freedom of choice and behave rationally to maximize utility (Amsden, 1980:13). The basic underlying rationale is that women invest less in their human capital in terms of qualifications, other training, and effort and commitment in general, than men and that this explains the proliferation of women at the lower end of the labour market and hence the gender pay gap. The early human capital theorist, Jacob Mincer, stressed women's role in the home as the underpinning reason for the lower wages and labour market segregation of females, with the family treated as a rational economic unit (Mincer, 1962:41-81). "Work at home is still an activity to which women, on the average, devote the larger part of their married life. It is an exclusive occupation of many women and of a vast majority when young children are present." (Mincer, 1962:43). Families are seen as the central units of consumption within society with an individual's use of time, particularly the allocation of time between market and non market activities, best understood within the context of the family with the conclusion that women restrict themselves to occupations compatible with a break for motherhood. This in turn plays a major contribution in the occupational segregation of women into low paid and low status areas. (Mincer and Polachek, 1974:169-171).

Later research by Becker (1991:57)<sup>1</sup> asserted that the incentive to invest in human capital specific to a particular activity is positively related to the time spent in that activity (ibid:157). Married women with primary responsibilities for childcare and housework allocate less energy to each hour of work than married men who spend equal time in the workplace. Household responsibilities of married women reduce their hourly earnings to below those of married men even when both work the same number of hours and have

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<sup>1</sup> This is taken from the second edition. The original work was written in 1971

the same market capital. Household responsibilities also induce occupational segregation as married women seek occupations and jobs that are less intensive and otherwise more compatible with the demands of their home responsibilities. (ibid:74-75). Single persons anticipate marriage and the sexual division of labour of married persons. Therefore single working men are more likely to be specialised towards the market sector than single working women. Wage rates are lower for women, at least partly, because they invest less than men in market human capital while productivity of household time is presumably greater for women partly because they invest more than men in household capital (ibid:41-42).

There have been more recent developments in this area that take into consideration modern day employment practices. 'Generic' and 'specific' forms of human capital have been identified where generic forms are skills that are transferable between employers, for example, formal qualifications, and specific forms are those that are of primary benefit to the employment situation where they have been developed, for example on the job training and experience (England et al, 2000:1742). Training that is specific to one's role is less versatile, losing its benefit to an individual who wishes to shift occupations, industry or firm (ibid:1741). Some researchers have also identified a wage penalty for motherhood. Budig and England put this at a reduction of 7% of earnings per child. However, although one third of this was attributable to loss of years' service, part-time employment and employment breaks, two thirds remains after controlling for elaborate measures of work experience leading the authors to conclude that "net of human capital variable, women earn less with each subsequent child" (Budig and England (2001: 219).



Another more recent and quite controversial viewpoint was developed by Catherine Hakim (2007). Hakim introduced the concept of 'preference theory' which is 'concerned primarily with women's choice between family work and market work: a genuine choice in affluent modern societies' (Hakim, 2007:1). Hakim criticises social science for its failure to predict and claims preference theory to be an empirically based predictive theory that tries to avoid the weaknesses of current theorising. (ibid:40-41) The central tenet of preference theory is that 'women are not a homogenous group' (ibid:157). Hakim divides women into three groups, home centred, work centred and adaptive (ibid:157). Home centred women prefer not to work but give priority to children and family life, accepting the division of labour in the home and putting homemaking and child-rearing at the centre of their existence (ibid:159). Hakim goes as far as to suggest that some such women may be well qualified but 'attend college and university with a view to meeting and marrying a man of at least equal education and social status' with 'colleges and universities as elite marriage markets as well as educational institutions (ibid: 159-160). Work-centred (and voluntarily childless) women's main priority in life is some activity other than motherhood and family life (ibid:164). Childless women are concentrated in this group but many have children 'as an expression of normality and as a weekend hobby' (ibid:164). Adaptive women are the largest and most diverse group encompassing 80% of adult females (ibid:165). Hakim claims that this group consists of women who want to combine employment and a family without either taking priority and gives examples of women choosing to become schoolteachers in order to spend school holidays with their children (ibid:166). This group also includes women with unplanned careers, who may develop careers by accident, and drifters with no ideas about the life they want who may change in response to the changing economic and social environment (ibid:166).

Preference theory has been extensively criticised. Nussbaum rejects preference based approaches for their failure to conduct a critical scrutiny of preference and desire that would reveal the many ways in which habit, fear, low expectations and unjust background conditions inform people's choices and wishes for their own lives (Nussbaum, 2001:114) . Preference theory also provides a powerful rationale for the gendered status quo and thus persisting material inequalities between men and women (Crompton, 2007:245). Hakim's theory suggests that the majority of women (home makers and adapters) are innately programmed to give priority to family rather than employment (ibid:233). Hakim also pays insufficient attention to those who are not voluntary members of home-centred or adaptive classes of women but are hampered in their employment choices by caring responsibilities (Browne, 2007:43). It also offers little in the way of assessing the deficiencies in employment and domestic policy which may impede women's capacity for paid work (ibid:43). Bryson describes many part-time jobs as a 'sticky floor' of badly paid work that offers a small degree of economic independence that is not a choice, as Hakim would suggest, but a dilemma (Bryson,2007: 47).

Human capital theory has also been much criticised over the years for its propensity to treat all the human subjects of investigation as 'timeless, classless, raceless and cultureless creatures' (Amsden, 1980:13). It offers an inadequate explanation of occupational sex segregation (England, 1982:369) and is also limited by its failure to consider power relations within society (Hyman, 1989:227) or discrimination within the labour market (Sawyer, 1989: 105-114). Human capital theories have also been criticised for their lack of consideration of women's unemployment, the neglect of patriarchal structures within the workplace and its assumption that households rationally decide labour market activities without considering possible inequalities of power within the household Walby (1986:72-73). Another major difficulty with human capital theory is that

over recent years women's labour market participation rates and educational attainments have increased dramatically, as detailed in Chapter 1, and women also take less time out of the labour market to have children (Walby, 1988:16). We should therefore see a marked decline in the gender pay gap and in labour market segregation as women increase their human capital. Also, according to Anker, the increase in the number of female headed households implies that more women need to work which in turn, according to neo-classical theory, should lead to major changes in the type of occupations women prefer and are offered (Anker, 1997:318). However, as discussed in Chapter 1, the gender pay gap persists and women remain largely concentrated in the lower paid occupations.

### **2.3 Internal and Dual Market Theories**

Institutional theories relying on neo-classical logic begin with the assumption that labour markets are segmented in certain ways and it is difficult for workers to pass from one segment to another (Anker, 1997:321-322).

Doeringer and Piore developed theories on 'internal labour markets' described as an administrative unit such as a manufacturing plant within which the pricing and allocation of labour is governed by a set of administrative rules and procedures governing entry and allocation of labour (Doeringer and Piore (1971:2). Doeringer and Piore recognise internal labour markets as a source of intentional discrimination as they select workers at the point of entry and confer privileges on them not available to those in the external labour markets (ibid:133). Also linked to the theory of internal labour markets is the theory of the simplest form of segmentation (Sawyer, 1989:82), the concept of dual labour markets.

Edwards, Gordon and Reich (1973) developed an historical theory of labour market segmentation that occurs as a result of the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism, identified as roughly 1890 onwards (Edwards, Gordon and Reich, 1973: 360). They define labour market segmentation as:

*“the historical process whereby political-economic forces encourage the division of the labour market into separate sub markets, or segments, distinguished by different labour market characteristics and behavioural rules”.*  
*(ibid: 359).*

They identified the process of segmentation into primary and secondary markets, differentiated by stability characteristics. Primary markets require and develop stable working habits, good wages, skills acquired on the job and job ladders (ibid:359). Secondary markets do not require stable working habits, wages are low, turnover is high and job ladders are few (ibid:359). Women, minority workers and young people mainly fill the secondary market (ibid:360). Within the primary sector Edwards, Gordon and Reich identify two further segments – ‘subordinate’ and ‘independent’ primary (ibid:360). Subordinate primary jobs are routine, encouraging dependability, discipline, responsiveness to rules and authority and acceptance of firm goals. Examples include factory and office jobs. Independent primary jobs encourage and require creative problem solving, self-initiating characteristics and often have professional standards. Voluntary turnover is high, motivation and achievement are highly rewarded. Labour markets are also segmented by race, present across all sectors but often within distinct segments within sub markets, and sex with certain jobs generally restricted to men and others to women. Wages in female segments are usually lower and the jobs require a ‘serving

mentality' – orientation to providing services to other people and particularly men (ibid:360).

Employers also consciously exploited race, ethnic and sex antagonisms to undercut unions and break strikes. Ethnic minorities were imported as strike-breakers stirring up racial hostility to deflect class conflicts into race conflicts and rival nationalities were employed at the same or in different plants to achieve segmentation and labour unrest between the groups (ibid:362). Employers also often transformed jobs into “female jobs” in order to render those jobs less susceptible to unionisation (ibid:362). Attempts were also made to weaken unionism by favouring the “business-orientated” craft union against the newer “social-orientated” industrial unions and, as the period progressed, educational credentials were used to regularise requirements for jobs (ibid:363). This helped maintain the somewhat artificial distinction between factory workers and those in routine office jobs and helped generate strong divisions within the office between semi-skilled white-collar workers and more highly skilled office staff. (ibid:363).

Simultaneously the increase in the number of smaller, more competitive and less capital-intensive firms on the industrial periphery lead to a dualism both within the industrial structure and also within working environments, wages and mobility patterns. Whereas the large monopolistic corporations developed job structures and internal relations that reflected stability, in the peripheral firms, where product demand was unstable, jobs and workers tended to be vulnerable (ibid:363). The results of labour market segmentation were three fold. Firstly, the workforce is divided which forestalls the potential movements uniting workers against employers (ibid:364). Secondly, it affects individuals perceptions of which segment is inaccessible to them, hence limiting aspirations for mobility (ibid:364). Finally, the division of workers into segments legitimises inequalities in authority and

control, for example, institutionalised sexism and racism are 'reinforced by the industrial authority of the white male foreman' (ibid:364).

Barron and Norris looked at the British labour market and concluded that the secondary labour market is predominately a female market. They described this phenomena as a dual labour market with the following features: more or less pronounced division into higher paying and lower paying sectors; mobility across the boundary of the sectors is restricted; higher paying jobs are tied to promotional or career ladders while lower paid jobs offer few opportunities for vertical movement; and higher paying jobs are relatively stable while lower paid are unstable (Barron and Norris, 1976:49). Barron and Norris identify five attributes that are associated with the secondary labour market: dispensability, social difference, lack of interest in obtaining training and experience, poor wages and lack of solidarity (ibid:172). Segmentation theories do not however offer adequate explanations as to why women are concentrated into these occupations and they also focus on the manufacturing industry (Beechey, 1986:111-112). In addition, the theories assume primary and secondary divisions in all British jobs which make it unsuitable when looking at jobs which are primarily female such as clerical work (Walby, 1988:82). Additionally, not all highly feminised occupations could be described as 'secondary' To use clerical work as an example again, many clerical workers have 'staff' conditions in relation to payment methods, length of the working week, regular hours etc (Walby, 1989:134). Additionally many, if not all, have stability of employment of the kind associated with primary jobs as a consequence of clerical work being disproportionately located in sectors which are most buoyant (ibid:134).

## 2.4 Marxist Analysis

No analysis of workplace inequality would be complete without giving consideration to Marxist theories which have formed the basis of many subsequent gender and class analyses. Marx himself analysed the position of women as part of the general struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, referring to them as part of his larger debates on capitalist production including some comments broadly relevant to the issue of women's subordination and liberation (Vogel, 1983:56). Marx's analysis is based around relations of appropriation and exploitation and is grounded in concepts that do not and could not address directly the gender of the exploiters and those whose labour is appropriated (Barrett, 1980: 8). Marx tended to group the position of women and children together and considered their position within production in the context of the family. He recognised that the development of machinery was used by capitalists as "a means of employing labourers of slight muscular strength and whose bodily development is incomplete, women and children, who were the first thing sought by capitalists who used machinery" (Marx, 1918:431)<sup>2</sup>. Machinery, according to Marx, "threw every member of the family into the labour market, spreading the value of a man's labour over his whole family and thus depreciating his labour power" (ibid:432). Marx bemoaned the position of women in the labour system, not in relation to their poor position within the system, but in relation to their position in the family, accusing capitalism of the moral degradation of women and children (ibid:436). He appears to neither fully analyse the unique position of women within the capitalist system nor sufficiently homogenise them as part of the general working class (MacKinnon, 1989:411). Even when women produced commodities as waged labour, Marx wrote about them primarily as mothers, housekeepers and members of the weaker sex (MacKinnon (1989:411). Consequently the opportunity to include women as equals within the working class struggle was missed entirely. 'Woman's

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<sup>2</sup> This is a later version of the original work which was published in 1867.

exploitability makes her a liability to the working class unless she stays at home' (MacKinnon, 1989:18).

Likewise, in his account of the development of the industrial reserve army, Marx did not mention women as specific candidates to make up this pool of disposable workers, described as a "mass of human material always ready for exploitation" (Marx, 1918:693). He does however identify a persistent feature of capitalist labour markets that endured throughout the last century, that of the reserve army of workers. This reserve army developed with the advancement of capitalist production and a corresponding growth in the demand for labour which occurred as capitalist accumulation required increasing numbers of workers. Expansion was however in 'fit and starts', also undergoing periods of contraction. During expanding periods large numbers of workers were drawn into capitalist production only to be 'set free' during periods of stagnation (Marx, 1918:694). This regulated the general movement of wages by the expansion and contraction of the industrial reserve army that corresponded to periodic changes in the industrial cycle (Marx, 1918: 699). During periods of stagnation and average prosperity the reserve army weighs down the active labour army and during periods of over-production and paroxysm, it holds its pretensions in check (Marx, 1918: 701). Undoubtedly these two features of production, the use of women and children to operate machinery (later identified as de-skilling) and the use of industrial reserve army, successfully held workers aspirations in check. However, how much they were deliberate strategies employed by capitalists to control men through the exploitation of women is not made clear by Marx.

A later advancement on the position of women within the capitalist system and within society was provided by Engels in his 1884 essay 'Origins of the family, private property and the state'. Engels asserted that property and the advent of monogamous marriage



was to blame for women's inferior position (Engels, 1892:96)<sup>3</sup>. He theorised that the appearance of this particular type of social structure announced a struggle between the sexes previously unknown in the whole previous prehistoric period. The first class opposition that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between men and women in monogamous marriage and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male. Engels described the male as the bourgeois within the family and the wife as the proletariat. The struggle for equality, according to Engels, would follow the same lines as the class struggle. In the industrial world the abolition of the special legal privileges of the capitalist class would lead to the legal equality of both classes. Likewise, the only way of creating real social equality between husband and wife would occur when both possess legally complete equality of rights. The first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry and this, in turn, demands the abolition of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society (ibid:105).

Marxist theory in relation to women was later developed along a number of different lines. Writers such as Braverman (1974) and Zaretsky (1976) analysed and developed early Marxist theory to offer explanations of women's labour market position. Braverman (1974:390-393) enhanced theories of de-skilling and the industrial reserve army to, amongst other things, make them more female specific than the analysis provided by Marx. He analysed male/female workforce participation rates in post World War Two United States, identifying a decline in male workers and an increase in female employment. He also identified similar polarisation of earnings in the United States with stagnation in the higher paid industries such as mining, construction and manufacturing and a growth in retail and service industries. Clerical work is provided as a specific

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<sup>3</sup> This is a later version of his original work published in 1858

example of the feminisation of the workforce and the consequent reduction in wages that occurred following mechanisation of office work. He suggests that there has been a move towards the reserve army of (female) workers and a simultaneous large scale deskilling with its consequent reduction in wages (ibid: 293-356).

The reserve army theory was important in displaying a link between women's subordination in employment and capitalist practices, and in refusing to relegate women to the home. However, it is not without its critiques. According to Collinson, Knights and Collinson (1990) the difficulty with the theory lies in its attempt to apply pre-existing Marxist categories to the analysis of women's employment. "By adhering to the 'economistic framework of traditional Marxism, much of the debate is unable to overcome the highly abstract and sexually undifferentiated character of the original gender-blind version of the reserve army" (Collinson, Knights & Collinson, 1990:27). Theories of deskilling and the industrial reserve army also appear to a certain extent to be contradictory. Implicit in the industrial reserve army theory is the dispensability of certain groups of workers. Logically, therefore, the reserve army would be the first to go in a recession. Conversely, de-skilling theory presents the view that as jobs become routinised by machinery the workforce becomes increasingly feminised and wages are lowered – surely capitalists would wish to hold onto these lower paid workers during periods of economic downturn as a cheaper alternative. This fear of female employment at the expense of men underlay attempts by organised workers to exclude women in preference to men (Bruegel, 1979: 17). There have also been times when female labour has been used as a cheaper alternative to male workers even where this implies male redundancy (Engels, 1845:163); (Bruegel, 1979: 18-19). Liff (1986) points to the fact that the large numbers of women who have entered the workforce since World War Two have not generally replaced men but have been employed in new or expanding industries

(Liff,1986:74-9) . The reserve army theory may however retain some validity in situations where managers have excessive control over workers, for example, part-time and temporary work. However, Collinson et al describe it as inadequate as a universal conceptual tool (Collinson et al, 1990:29).

Eli Zaretsky (1976) claimed that the understanding of the family and the economy as separate realms is specific to capitalist society (Zaretsky, 1976:23). Zaretsky recognised that sexism predated capitalism but stressed that the particular form the sexism takes has been shaped by capitalist society. Capitalism is the first society in history to socialise production on a large-scale, splitting material production between its socialised form (the sphere of commodity production) and private labour, predominately performed by women in the home (Zaretsky, 1976:29). In the early stages of industrial capitalism the family remained a productive unit 'putting out' or bringing whole family members into manufacturing institutions. By the nineteenth century however the factory system had eliminated many of the productive functions of the family (Zaretsky, 1976:33). " The 1830s and 1840s saw a withdrawal of mothers from the world of work as ideals were promoted that idealised the bourgeois family as a haven from the fierce conflict of world interest" (ibid:52). Amongst the proletariat traditional divisions of labour within the family were threatened as women and children joined the men in factories. Many feared turning women and children into wage earners would destroy the family. This led to the call for reforms and protective legislation. Women were also largely excluded from trade unions who demanded wages for men that could support the family (ibid:64). The specific class position of housewives under capitalism became that of 'classlessness'. Socialists and others understood her class position to be that of her husband's since her relation to the outside world was mediated through him.

The twentieth century socialist movement failed to challenge this ideological view of personal life and women's labour within the home, the basis of which saw production and economy as restricted to the sphere of commodity production and exchange. Capitalist society takes the form of production of surplus value and as housewives and mothers do not produce surplus value their participation with waged labour as an interdependent system of production has become obscured. Socialist theory could not therefore distinguish the specific oppression of women from the general oppression of the working class. Whilst focusing on the rise of industry and the growth of the proletariat it failed to pay adequate attention to its complement – the isolation of housewives and children from socialised production and the emergence of separate spheres of personal life. Subsequent programmes for liberation focused on paid work and left women's place in the home relatively intact. (ibid:80-82). Zaretsky uses this theory to explain why feminism has developed separately from the socialist movement. He recognises that socialism missed a major dimension of women's oppression but maintains that feminism arose from the same process of capitalist industrialisation – the removal of the production of goods from the home (ibid:137). Zaretsky concludes by advocating socialism as the key to women's emancipation. Socialism will transform personal life by abolishing alienated labour and diffusing our personal needs throughout society. The end of capitalism will see the end of the separation of private and public lives and the end of oppression (ibid:140-141).

Marxist analyses provide an historical account and explanation of the development of capitalist labour markets. However, they are historical in context and therefore unable to account for the range of women's experiences today both within the family and the workforce. They also give inadequate consideration of other processes that may be operating in society to cause women's disadvantage other than the desire of capitalists to accumulate cheap labour. There is also a failure within this theory to give adequate

explanation as to why it was women in poorer paid, secondary markets. There is also a common theme of over-focusing on married women and the traditional family within the Marxist debate with insufficient attention paid to alternative family structures or single women.

## **2.5 Feminist Analysis**

The perceived failings of political and economic explanations to adequately analyse women's position within society and also the persistence of inequalities that still prevailed in the latter part of the last century led to an upsurge in feminist activity and research in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Feminism in itself is not a twentieth century phenomena. Liberal feminism has a long history dating back to at least 1792 when Mary Wollstonecroft published the 'first major work on feminist theory in history' (Donovan, 2012:1), the 'Vindication of the Rights of Women (ibid:1). Early liberal feminism challenged the dominant view of the time that there were natural differences between men and women (ibid:2). This early feminism remained influential for many centuries and was the inspiration for the suffrage movement (Tong, 2009:21) and also for much of the Twentieth Century equal rights campaigns (ibid:23).

Unlike Marxist and Socialist feminism, liberal feminism is not concerned with the need to overthrow patriarchy and capitalism (Tong, 2008:46). While recognising social inequalities and injustices within the status quo, liberal feminists see them as 'mere aberrations that can gradually be rectified through legal procedures and attitudinal change' (Banderage, 2008:495). Hence, liberal feminism has concentrated on legal measures such as the vote and equality legislation (ibid:495). Although criticised for its denial of women's need to overthrow patriarch and capitalism, women owe to liberal feminism many of the civil,

education, occupational and reproductive rights that they currently enjoy (Tong, 2009:47). However not all feminists agreed that gender equality could be achieved by reforming the system and many feminist academics either chose to develop Marxist and socialist theories to provide a more adequate explanation of women's oppression within society and the workplace or chose to develop entirely new, radical, theories that sought to explain the disadvantage of women and offer solutions to procure women's emancipation.

The concept of patriarchy was also developed as a theory to explain the disadvantaged position of women within the labour market and within society as a whole. The literal definition of patriarchy is 'the rule of the father', and refers to societies whereby the head of the household is male and power passes from father to the eldest son (Crompton, 1997:9). This definition would at first glance appear to discount patriarchy as a concept that is of great relevance within Western societies in the 21st Century. However, this somewhat outdated and simplistic definition fails to adequately define the complicated patriarchal relationships that would still appear to exist within the social and economic structures of today. There have undoubtedly been changes in both the degree and form of patriarchy in Britain and within Western society as a whole, especially during the last Century. Generally, a patriarchal father figure does not dominate households, succession is no longer automatically afforded to the eldest son, and improvements in pay and access to education and employment for women have undoubtedly occurred. This may lead some to argue that patriarchy has been eliminated. Others however argue that it has merely undergone subtle changes.

Hartmann suggests that the material basis of patriarchy does not rest solely on child rearing in the family but on all social structures that enable men to control women's labour.

She defines patriarchy as “a set of social relations between men that have a material base and which, through hierarchy, establish or create interdependence and solidarity between men that enable them to dominate women” (Hartmann, 1979:11). Although men have different places in the hierarchy depending on their class, race or ethnic group, they are united in their shared relationship of dominance over women (ibid:11). Walby describes two forms of patriarchy, private and public. Private patriarchy is based upon household production as the main form of oppression whereas in public patriarchy, employment and the state form the basis of patriarchal oppression (Walby, 1990:24). Walby’s argument is that capitalist society and the women’s movement during the last century eroded private patriarchy to a now individualist basis, diminished by capitalist society and the women’s movement. Public patriarchy now dominates as a collective form of patriarchy apparent in women’s still disadvantaged position in the labour market and failure to make any massive impact in positions of political and economic power. Walby defines patriarchy as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.” (Walby, 1990:20).

Patriarchy has however been interpreted very differently by feminist authors, with some rejecting its value as a tool of feminist analysis. Rowbotham describes it as a universal and historical form of oppression which returns us to biology thus obscuring the need to recognise not only biological differences, but also the multiplicity of ways in which societies have defined gender (Rowbotham (1979:74). She also describes patriarchy as implying a fixed structure, rather than the kaleidoscope of forms within which women and men encounter one another ‘with no notion of how women might act to transform the situation of their sex or consider aspects of male and female relationships that, far from being oppressive, include varying degrees of mutual aid’. (ibid:75). Rowbotham favours the development of an historical concept of sex-gender relationships that “would

encompass changing patterns of male control and its congruence or incongruence with various aspects of women's power" (ibid:75). Pollert also provides a critique of patriarchy as a conceptual tool, criticising it as "having no intrinsic motor or dynamic which can explain its self-perpetuation unlike capitalism whose internal dynamic is the self expansion of capital" (Pollert, 1996:639). Acker also argues against using patriarchy as an analytical tool favouring shifting our focus to the question of how gender is implicated in all social processes in order to better understand how the subordination of women is continually reproduced (Acker,1989:239).

The focus of radical feminism tended to be the patriarchal oppression of women via their sexuality. The radical feminists had little to say on paid employment or politics. Instead their theme of the 'personal is political' rendering everything as gendered and political (Walby, 1990:156). Millett (1977) asks the question "Can the relationship between the sexes be viewed in a political light at all?" (Millett, 1977:23). She then goes on to argue that as the term politics shall refer to power-structured relationships where one group of persons is controlled by another, then sex can be seen as a status category with political implications (ibid:23-24). Millett analyses the works of three famous male writers to illustrate how they use sex in their writings to control and humiliate women. (ibid: 236-361). This analysis unfortunately reads more like a critical literature review than an attempt to provide a coherent illustration of how sex is politicised and comes to form part of the patriarchal oppression of the state. Brownmiller (1975) emphasised the domination of women by rape as a way of looking at relative strength and power. However, although she provides a brilliant and provocative account of rape as socially structured and implicated in the subordination of women, her book is under-theorised, consisting mainly of lengthy accounts of rape atrocities (Walby, 1990:135). Firestone (1974) argues that the biology of reproduction puts women in a subordinate position to men. Firestone saw



women as a class of their own; a 'sex class', described by Firestone as 'so deep as to be invisible' (Firestone, 1974:11). Firestone's work centres around the biological family as the primary source of women's inequality. To this end, she does recognise the work of Engels, but concludes it would be a mistake to explain the oppression of women purely by this economic interpretation (ibid:14). Firestone's analysis is based on socialist principles in that she advocates a 'revolt of the underclass (women) who need to seize control of production and human fertility' (ibid:16). 'Just as the end goal of a socialist revolution is the elimination not only of economic class privilege but of economic class distinction itself so the end goal of the feminist revolution is not just the elimination of male privilege but of sex distinction itself' (ibid:19). In her conclusion Firestone sets out her vision for the 'ultimate revolution'. These are

'the freeing of women from the tyranny of reproduction by every means possible, and the diffusion of the child-rearing role to the society as a whole, men as well as women; the political autonomy, based on economic independence, of both women and children; the complete integration of women and children into society; and the sexual freedom of women and children' (ibid: 195).

Firestone's account provides a powerful account of the how the forces of socialisation shape women's expectations, particularly in her chapters on Love and the Culture of Romance. However, little explanation or analysis of women's position in the labour market is provided. The family and reproduction is seen as the omnipresent oppressors with no explanation as to the commonality of women's experience be they married, single, mothers or childless. Finally, her vision for emancipation degenerates into an unlikely

scenario of a society that includes the abolition of formal education, mass non-biological reproduction and sexual freedom for children.

## **2.6 Marxist Feminist Theory**

Early Marxist feminist debate was heavily biased around women's position in the home. This gave rise to the 'domestic-labour' debate on whether housework is work central to the workings of capital and productive of value and surplus value. Seccombe's early publication 'The Housewife and her labour under capitalism' was written in response to her dissatisfaction with Marxist theory to "adequately assess the role of the nuclear family" (Seccombe, 1974:3). Seccombe's argument was that housework is the "labour that produces the labour power" (ibid:3) both "daily by getting the worker to the plant gates every morning and on a generational basis by reproducing the next generation of wage and domestic labour" (ibid:14). Likewise James and Dalla Costa argued that domestic workers are 'social work in as much as they serve the reproduction of labour power' (James and Dalla Costa, 1972:33). James and Dalla Costa claim that it was the advent of capitalism that destroyed the relative power that women had that derived from the family's dependence on their labour by concentrating production that previously took place in the home into the factory and the office (ibid:24). The male becomes the patriarchal figure within the family, separated from the home and with the burden of financial responsibility for women, children and all those who do not receive a wage (ibid:24). Likewise Beechey argues that the background against which the position of women in capitalist production must be understood is the separation of the family from the means of production, which occurs in the course of capitalist accumulation (Beechey, 1977:251-252). The domestic labour explanation on how capitalist production created the nuclear family with women's subordinate role as housewife and financial dependent provides an

adequate explanation of the transformation of gender relations at a specific point in time. However, its explanation is not so relevant in today's society when a higher proportion of women work. Additionally, little explanation is given to the disadvantage women experience in the labour market. Instead, the participation in the workforce is seen as one of the ways that women reject their role in society and change their relationship with their husband and children (James and Della Costa, 1972:72). The reinforcement of gender roles within the workplace or the fact that working women still, in the main, take responsibility for childcare and housework are not considered.

Barrett (1980) defines the role of the Marxist feminist to 'identify the operation of gender relations as and where they may be distinct from, or connected with, the processes of production and reproduction as understood by historical materialism' Barrett (1980:9). This particular feminist analysis involves emphasis on the relations between capitalism and the oppression of women and requires an awareness of the specific oppression of women in capitalist relations of production (ibid:9). It also needs to be seen in the light of gender divisions which preceded the transition to capitalism and which, as far as we can tell, a socialist revolution would not itself abolish (ibid:9). She provides a comprehensive account of the basis of Marxist feminist analysis. She argues that the division of labour between women and men is not only oppressive for women but divisive for the working classes as a whole, as a divided class is a weakened class (ibid:162). Barrett asks for an understanding of the division of labour in contemporary capitalism in terms of the labour theory of value as identified and explained by Marx (ibid:163) She explains the position of women in the labour force in Marxist terms referring to the processes of de-skilling, labour market segmentation and the removal of control from the labourer by splitting labour processes into the smallest possible component parts. She identifies the separation of home and the workforce and the breakdown of the labour process and consequent

differentiation of skill as preconditions for capitalist accumulation. The separation of home and workplace lead to the relegation of women to the home and exclusion from the workplace (ibid:164). This is identified as the capitalist assumption of the inevitability of women being placed first and foremost in the home because of their biology. When women did enter the workplace their struggle was a long and uneven one against male workers who were often better organised, for example, in craft unions and who were successfully able to over-ride the interests of women. Simultaneously the separation of home and workplace proved oppressive to women because of the question of who was to take primary responsible for childcare (ibid:165).

Marxist feminist debate on childcare continues today as an issue particularly affecting women. Bryson identifies employment practice, such as a culture of long hours, and lack of affordable childcare as still being a major problem for women today (Bryson, 2007: 46). She recognises that some women are very successful and able to pay for childcare and domestic assistance but asserts that the 'kind of equality that enables a few high flying women to behave like privileged men is a very limited type of equality' (ibid:48). Bryson argues for a return to a socialist point of view and a re-evaluation of 'merit worth and importance' with good support for child and other caring responsibilities with recognition of the importance of domestic work (ibid:49). However, Bryson recognises that such a radical and expensive policy is unlikely in a market economy but points to some optimistic policy development such as the National Childcare Strategy and increased rights for flexible working and parental leave (ibid:50-51).

Although not strictly a Marxist analysis, Barrett (1980) also raised the important issue of the definition and valuation of women's skills. Women face differentiation within the workplace on the basis of skill as women have frequently failed to establish recognition of

the skills required by their work and have consequently remained in a weak bargaining position in a divided and competing workplace (Barrett, 1980:162-166). The definition of skill is recognised by Barrett to be an important element in women's disadvantaged position. She provides an analysis of the 'skill' problem faced by women: skill, as defined by technical expertise, is often used to give legitimation to the control or authority of particular individuals; acquired skills play an important role in wage negotiations and have resulted in a number of exclusionary practices which serve to protect the bargaining position of particular groups of workers; and distinction between 'mental' and 'manual' labour, with 'white collar' labour being seen as more skilled than manual labour even though control over labour processes are absent from most work normally associated as 'mental' labour. (Barrett, 1980:167-169).

Undoubtedly entrenched definitions of skills persist in today's labour market in spite of a raft of Equal Pay policies, job evaluation schemes and individual employer policies. Skill is not an objective economic fact but an ideological category imposed on certain types of work by virtue of the sex and power of the workers who perform it (Phillips and Taylor, 1980:79). Phillips and Taylor recognise that women may be refused access to training and that domestic responsibilities, namely childcare, may curtail their ability to enter training even when offered but suggest it is naive to think that the provision of day nurseries and the educational upgrading of women would result in women taking their places alongside men with the consequent disappearance of gender ghettos in waged work (ibid:79). Pollert recognised the 'systematic under valuation of women's work' in her analysis of the productivity scheme in tobacco factory during the early 1970s (Pollert, 1981). Qualities such as close concentration, accuracy and manual dexterity that require obvious skill and training in craft technician's jobs, were relegated to 'natural' and untrained 'aptitudes' in women's occupations Pollert (1981:65). Equal Pay legislation

failed to make significant differences as women were highly concentrated into particular sections of the workplace with the bulk of women in four of the lowest job groups with three quarters in the bottom. The highly segmented work they carried out was seen a mere women's territory and hardly regarded as work. Most women manual workers occupied the lowest occupational job groups in the job assessment scheme that reflected and reinforced the way that employers exploit sexual divisions within the balance of class forces. Different definitions of skill as either 'male' or 'female' have developed throughout the history of capitalism and remain entrenched in the labour market today, usually to the detriment of women. Women have frequently failed to establish recognition of the skills required by their work and consequently have remained in a weak bargaining position in a divided and competitive workplace (Barrett, 1980:162-166). There has also been a systematic failure of women, men, trade unions and employers to acknowledge women's work as skilled work as women's jobs are more likely to stress the personal and social relationships which have been historically undervalued (Jenson, 1989:151; Horrell, Rubery and Burchell, 2003:220; Gaille and White, 1993:28). Frequently this work is classified as unskilled as it is considered 'natural' and reflective of the supposed talents of women rather than acquired skills which should be recompensed (Jenson, 1989:151; Davies and Rosser, 1986:97). Identified by Hirschfeld as 'emotional labour' (Hirschfeld, 2003:7)<sup>44</sup>, work of this type is more likely to be carried out by women than men (ibid:162). Additionally, the skills associated with emotional labour frequently go unrewarded and unrecognised in spite of being acquired through considerable experience (Noon and Blyton, 2007:206-207). Men have also been able to differentiate their skills from women's even in female dominated workgroups. This was clearly illustrated in a study by Munro on work and union activity in the British healthcare sector (Munro, 1999). Even in the female dominated domestic service occupation 'separate jobs were devised which were constructed as men's jobs (Munro, 1999:95). This was achieved by organising slightly

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<sup>44</sup> This is the second edition. The original work was published in 1983.

different patterns of work or tasks or the use of slightly different types of equipment which was used to justify placing men on a higher grade than the women (ibid:98). The concept is very important when analysing women's labour market position as it is used by different groups to 'lay claims to status, special treatment and higher rewards' (Noon and Blyton, 2007:143). In particular skill differentiation impacts on the gender division of labour with a resultant undervaluing of women's work (ibid:143).

Beechey (1977) presents a discussion of married women's work as a form of semi-proletarianised workers as far as capital is concerned. Her analysis is based around the assumption of the male bread-winner. Women can be paid wages at a price which is below the value of labour as the married woman does not have to pay for the entire cost of reproducing her nor that of her children. Beechey suggests that married women's labour is completely advantageous to capital because of this but also asks 'what of single women?' (Beechey, 1977:258). She then goes on to suggest the position of single women as either cushioned by her family who bear some of the costs of day-to-day production (i.e. housing, cleaning and feeding), equating the position of young single women to that of young single males. Women who do not have husbands or families are 'depressed into poverty' with single or widowed mothers being particularly affected (ibid: 258-259). In the 1970s when Beechey wrote this work the male breadwinner model was very much in evidence. This model has subsequently been in decline (Crompton, 1999; Janssens, 1999; Creighton, 1999). However when considering part-time work which is overwhelmingly female and predominately a form of married women's work (Crompton, 1997:31) Beechey's theory holds true and was in fact later developed to take into account part-time work (Beechey and Perkins, 1984).

Part-time work has a reputation for being 'insecure, low-paid and with little by way of training or promotion' (Crompton, 1997:33). Part-time women are over-represented in the lower points of the pay spine and underrepresented in the upper points (Thornley, 2007:463). Part-time workers often earn component wages (Siltanen, 1994) which make a contribution to the household but would be unable to sustain a household without support from a partner or the state. Many women working full-time continued to make gains in terms of job opportunities and pay, part-time workers have not. For example, the gender pay gap for full-time work has fallen to 9.6% (Office for National Statistics, 2012:9). When part-time work is included in the calculation, the gap increases to a massive 20.2 per cent (ibid:9). This strongly suggests that part-time workers occupy a class below those of full-time workers and, as Beechey asserts, are a form of semi-proletarianised worker (Beechey, 1977:258). Classification of the skills required for part-time jobs also differ from those of full-time work with some suggesting that the most striking differences between the content and skill of jobs is more dependent on whether they are full or part time than whether they are male or female (Horrell, Rubery and Burchell, 2003:219; Connolly and Gregory, 2007:152).

However, although Marxist feminists have been very influential in developing theories into an explanation of women's subordination in the capitalist system their contribution must to a certain extent be viewed in an historical context. Traditional Marxist feminists were able to explain how capitalism caused the separation of home and workplace but they fail to explain why capitalism assigned women to the home and men to the workplace (Tong, 1998:174). Analysis of female employment also tends to be heavily biased around the employment of married women (Beechey: 1977:258-259; Bradley, 1996:87). Attempts at the integration of Marxism and feminism have also been criticized for 'subsuming the feminist struggle into the 'larger' struggle against capitalism' (Hartmann, 1979:1). There is thus a tendency for gender issues to 'slide out of sight and imperatives of class to come to



the fore' (Bradley, 1996:88). Moreover, not all women are members of the working class but may still be subject to gender inequalities. Thus, although Marxist feminism provided a credible explanation for the exploitation of women under capitalism it failed to adequately address the role of men and male dominated trade unions in maintaining women's disadvantage in the workplace.

## 2.7 Dual systems theory

An alternative was therefore sought to provide synthesis between Marxism and feminism with the development of dual systems theories. Juliet Mitchell's summary of the major differences in Marxists and feminist analysis in her 1971 *Women's Estate* provides a useful comparison between the political explanations and the feminist's explanations of women's position in order to move forward with the development of a more integrated theory.

**Table 2.1: Comparison of radical feminism and socialism**

Radical Feminists.	Abstract Socialists.
Men are the oppressors.	Men are not the oppressors: it's the system.
All societies have been male supremist.	Capitalism oppresses women.
It starts with a psychological power struggle – which men win.	It starts with private property.
Socialism has nothing to offer us.	We've got to discover 'our relationship' to Socialism.
Socialist countries oppress women.	The scene isn't too good in socialist countries for women – but that's because women's liberation wasn't part

	of the revolutionary struggle.
What we want, is all women to unite against men and male-dominated society	It's most necessary to convince men of the importance of our struggle. They are oppressed by their roles too.
We want to liberate women from male oppression	All people are alienated under capitalism; we want to liberate everybody to become 'whole people'.

Source: (Mitchell, 1971:94-95).

Mitchell (1971) stated that both positions are “possibly right together, both are certainly wrong apart” (Mitchell,1971:95-96). She recognised socialist countries still tend to discriminate against women but asserts that what is important is that “the oppression of women is intrinsic to the capitalist system, it is not to the socialist” (ibid:95). She recognises that one of the problems with socialism is that socialists try to prevent feminists from having their feminist consciousness by asking them to subscribe to a working class ideology ‘which can exist no more than a feminist ideology’ (ibid:96). She concludes that feminist consciousness has been inadequately represented in the formation of socialist ideology as oppression of women has, so far, been inadequately combated in socialist revolutions. ‘We should ask the feminist questions, but try to come up with some Marxist answers’ (ibid:100).

Socialist feminism’s concern is with the interaction between capitalism and patriarchy with two main themes developing - one that sees capitalist and patriarchal relations as so intertwined and interdependent as to form a mutually interdependent system and those that see them as separate systems that influence each other. Eisenstein (1979) argues the case for socialist feminism “there are socialist women who are committed to

understanding and changing the system of capitalism, socialist feminists are committed to understanding the system of power derived from capitalist patriarchy” (Ibid:5). She advocates an understanding of the interdependence of capitalism and patriarchy as essential to the socialist feminist political analysis with the synthesis of radical feminism and Marxist analysis ‘as a necessary first step in formulating a cohesive feminist political theory’ – a theory of capitalist patriarchy. Eisenstein’s account suggests that it is the male capitalist who is responsible for the patriarchal forces that affect women (Ibid:92). Eisenstein argued that the state protects patriarchy as a system of power much in the same way that it protects capitalism and racism (Ibid:223). The state re-enforces patriarchy through ideology and the law that cloaks women’s oppression while promising equality (Ibid:228). Eisenstein gives the example of ‘working mother’ to illustrate the patriarchal bias of the capitalist market in assuming women as mothers do not work. She also recognises the contradictory needs of patriarchy and capitalism as conflicts develop between them due to the differentiation of home and work as specifically female and male spheres and the necessity in advanced capital society for many women to work in both. The two systems come into conflict with one another as they try to meet one another’s needs. She differentiates between familial patriarchy that exists within family life and social patriarchy that occurs on a larger social scale and in a political context. Conflicts arise between patriarchal values of society that define women’s responsibility and place in the home as mothers and the growing needs of the capitalist economy for women to enter the workforce. The state attempts to create cohesion as it needs to operate with one priority – the protection of the capitalist patriarchal order, weakened by the ideology of liberalism and equal opportunities (Ibid: 202-205).

Hartmann takes a dualist approach (later developed further by Walby: 1986: 51-69), treating patriarchy and capitalism as analytically independent and potentially in conflict

(Hartmann, 1979:14-22). Hartmann analysed gender inequality in terms of the interrelationship of patriarchy and capitalism arguing that both should be recognised as separate structures that have historically had important effects on each other. Whilst analytically independent, they operate in partnership within western society as interacting social structures. Hartmann's analysis provides an "important advance in the theory of gender inequality because of its recognition of patriarchy and capitalism as two separate structures with mutual effects" (Walby, 1986:45).

An historical analysis of women's employment under capitalism seems to add credence to this theory as industrialisation offered far fewer opportunities for emancipation of women than the Marxists would have predicted. As men became increasingly involved in waged work, the rate of economic activity amongst women declined until by 1911 only 35.32% of women were employed as opposed to 84.05% of men (Bain, Bacon and Pimlott, 1972:115). Instead of fighting for equal wages for men and women the concept of the family wage (obviously paid to men and not women) was encouraged by the trade union movement, and has been linked to moves to exclude women from the workplace and encourage them to stay in the domestic sphere. Certainly legislation of the 1800s such as the 1844 Factory's Act and the 1842 Mines Act sought to restrict or exclude women from a variety of occupations on the premise of protecting women, confining them to lower paid occupations or excluding them completely from certain industries (Walby, 1986: 90:129). Some however see these exclusions as having primarily a patriarchal motive. Walby charges male trade unionists as operating exclusionary practices with varying degrees of success (ibid:56). Stronger, craft based unions were able to maintain the exclusion of women in order to retain the scarcity of their labour and hence their pay whereas weaker unions, such as the clerical unions were unable to successfully exclude women in spite of attempts to do so. They therefore concentrated on ensuring women were confined to the

lower grades within the profession thereby contributing to the segregation that persists today (ibid:244). In turn capital adapted to patriarchy and even married women who were willing to work often found themselves excluded by paternalistic employers and the state who had a clear policy that excluded married women from work and confined them to the home to take care of their children (Pahl, 1984:65). Employers realised that keeping women at home produced and maintained healthier workers than wage-working wives and that educated children became better workers than non-educated ones (Hartmann, 1979:17).

Although the terms of this bargain have changed over time, Hartmann maintains that family and women's work in the family serve capital by providing a labour force, serving men and their families and hence serving capitalism as consumers. Hartmann argues for the persistence of the family wage as the cornerstone of the sexual division of labour. Women's lower wages in the labour market combined with the need for someone to rear the children assure the continued existence of the family as a necessary income-pooling unit and allowing the control of women's labour by men both within and outside the family (ibid:18). As the number of women in the workforce continues to increase we are merely moving from what Walby describes as private patriarchy to public patriarchy (Walby, 1990:24).

Dual systems theory offered a comprehensive explanation as to how women became to be segregated into certain occupations with certain assumptions on their abilities and levels of skills. It also made many contributions to 'a feminist understanding of women and class, unearthing some of the history of working class women and men in nineteenth and early twentieth century capitalism' (Acker, 2006a:22) Chapter 4 examines the early history

of the clerical profession and it is very clear how capitalism and patriarchy both served to disadvantage women causing them to become trapped into certain occupations. However, like many theories dual systems tends to treat society as a 'relatively uniform totality and of little help in understanding the specifics and diversities of organisational life' (Alvesson and Billing, 2009:66). Consequently, over recent years poststructuralist and postmodern feminism have emerged as a major influence in understanding gender (Ibid:24). These theories emphasise variation and fragmentation and tend to discourage broad brush views that encompass the idea of gender systems (Ibid:24).

## **2.8 Postmodernism and Inequality Regimes**

Postmodern feminists reject any feminist theory that aims to provide a single explanation for women's oppressions (Tong, 2009:270) and for relying on a binary account of male and female (Browne, 2007:1). Instead post-modernists sought to destabilise the notion of gender by insisting upon a spectrum of fluid identities (ibid:1). Some post-modernists came to argue that differences in ethnic origin, sexual orientation, race, class and culture, made it impossible to unify different individual's experiences under 'woman' (Lawson, 2007:139). This perspective sees the world from an individualist perspective of differences without any system or collectively whether oppressive or otherwise (Lawson, 2007:139). However, postmodern critique is inadequate as it completely loses sight of the earlier feminist contributions and its logic allows no basis for systematic forces of societal discrimination (Lawson, 2007:139) but tends to 'collapse into an out and out individualism' (Soper, 1991:98). What is needed is a conception that recognises difference as well as the need for collective organisation and struggle (Lawson, 2007:140) or, as Walby puts it:

“we need a structural, though not structuralist theorisation of gender, which draws on the insights of discourse analysis in the specification of these structures, in order to conceptualise patterns of continuity and difference” (Walby, 1997:5).

To meet this aim Walby developed her theory on patriarchal systems into an explanation of gender systems or gender regimes (Walby, 1997:5). Gender regimes are a systems of interrelated gendered structures, now described as more domestic and more public gender regimes (ibid:6). She points out that the use of the term ‘gender regime’ should ‘not be interpreted as suggesting that the systematic gender inequality of patriarchy is over’ (ibid:6) but merely that it has undergone changes. For example, the household, or domestic gender regime, does not cease to be a relevant structure in a the public form but it is no longer the chief one (ibid:6). The public gender regime is no longer about excluding women from public life, but about their segregation and subordination in the public arena (ibid:6). Walby also claims that different forms of gender regimes coexist as a result of diversity within gender relations (ibid:6). These will be dependent on such factors as age, class, ethnicity and relationship status (ibid:6). For example, older women are more likely to be involved in a more domestic regime and the higher socio economic groups are more likely to be in a more public form (ibid:6).

In a similar vein Acker discussed inequality regimes (Acker, 2006). Acker’s account of inequality regimes offers a comprehensive explanation of the maintenance and persistence of inequalities within organisations. Acker’s approach focuses on the idea of regimes as organisational processes rather than structures of power, cathexis and labour (Acker, 2006b:109). Inequality regimes are interconnecting processes that produce and

maintain racialised and gendered class relations (ibid:109). Acker defines inequality regimes thus:

“All organisations have inequality regimes, defined as loosely interrelated practice, processes, actions and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender and racial inequalities within particular organisations” (Acker, 2006b:443)

Acker defines inequalities within organisations as:

“systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources and outcomes, workplace decision such as how to organise work; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and monetary rewards; respect; and pleasure in work and work relations” (ibid:443).

Ackers defines class as ‘enduring and systematic differences in access to and control over resources’ (ibid:444). She defines gender as ‘socially constructed differences between men and women and the beliefs and identities that support differences and inequality’ (ibid:444). Acker claims that until fairly recently gender and class were almost completely integrated in that managers were almost always men and the lower level white collar workers were almost always women (idib:444). However, she recognises that women are now present in the managerial ranks although ‘secretaries, clerks, servers and care providers are still primarily women’ (ibid:444). This gender segregation is another aspect of inequality that varies considerably between organisations (ibid:446). Acker also



suggests that even when men and women are present in the same occupation they tend to do different jobs (ibid:426) and even when job titles are the same, men and women may carry out different duties (ibid:446)

Inequality regimes are maintained and reproduced via the organisation of the workplace, frequently based around the image of a white man totally dedicated to work and with no responsibilities for childcare or family demands (ibid:448). They are also maintained in the ordering of positions and people in a way that reproduces class, gender and racial inequalities and in recruitment practices that assign females as more appropriate for some jobs and males for others (ibid:448-449). They are also produced in wage setting and supervisory practices; and in informal interactions at work such as the use of gender and class based assumptions about individuals within the workplace (ibid:448-451). Central to the maintenance of these inequality regimes are the legitimacy of inequalities and control and compliance (ibid:453-454). The legitimacy of the inequalities varies between organisations and are more legitimised in organisations with rigid bureaucracies (ibid:454). They also vary with political and economic conditions (ibid:453). Acker recognises that legislation has made gender and race inequality less legitimate than class but, at the same time, these inequalities can become more legitimate when embedded in legitimate class processes (ibid:453). Acker gives the example of clerical work as an occupation where low paid and low status are historically and currently produced as both a class and gender inequality (ibid:453). Most people take this for granted as just part of the way in which work is organised and thus see these visible inequalities as legitimate (ibid:454).

Mechanisms for exerting control and achieving compliance with inequalities also vary (ibid:454). These include direct controls such as rules and penalties for breaking them;

rewards in the form of wages and coercion and physical or verbal violence (ibid:454). Indirect controls include unobtrusive methods such as technological control (such as monitoring call or internet usage) and selective recruitment (ibid:454). Internalised controls include belief in the structures and rules of the organisation and organisational relationships such as those between manager and subordinates (ibid:54). Similarly internalised or invisible controls are very influential, such as 'the belief that there is no point in challenging the fundamental gender, race and class nature of things' (ibid:454). Other internalised controls are pleasure in the work, fear and self-interest (ibid:454).

Inequality regimes are difficult to change and challenge especially during economic downturns when companies are down-sizing and out-sourcing to reduce labour costs (ibid:460). Ackers also notes 'the absence of broader social movements outside organisations agitating for change' and the limitations of antidiscrimination legislation to challenge structural inequalities (ibid:460). However, she also optimistically notes 'the visibility of inequality seems to be increasing and its legitimacy decreasing which may be the opening move in a larger, more energetic attack on equality regimes' (Ibid:460).

Acker later developed the concept of inequality regimes to introduce the concept of a 'gendered substructure of organisations' as a way of answering the persistent question of why gender inequalities, including the gender pay gap and sex segregation of jobs, persists in spite of the women's movement, equality laws, massive movement of women into employment and the achievement of gender equality in the number of men and women benefitting from higher education (Acker, 2012:215). Gendered substructures are often invisible processes in the lives of organisations in which gendered assumptions about women and men are embedded and reproduced and gender inequalities perpetuated (ibid:215). Acker's account of gendered substructures is similar to her

account of inequality regimes in that it considers factors such as organisational processes, organisational cultures, interactions on the job and gendered identities within the workplace (ibid:215-216). However, she acknowledges that this analysis of gender is incomplete because it ignores racial and class processes that are 'also essential elements in the on-going reproduction of inequalities' (ibid:219). The concept of intersectionality is introduced as a way to conceptualise the complex interweaving of analytically separate processes (ibid:19). Intersectionality is used to address the limitations of gender as a single analytical tool (McCall, 2005:1771) by recognising the complexity of social hierarchies in different ways (Anthins, 2012:121). Gendered processes do not stand alone but 'intersect with and are shaped by race and class processes, as well as other forms of social exclusion' (Acker, 2012:214).

## **2.9 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter is to examine some of the large body of theory that has been developed to explain women's labour market position. The development of the theories over time has been considered and to a large extent some of them have to be set in the context of the time that they were developed. Although no one theory gives an entirely satisfactory explanation, each has its own merits and shortcomings and most make a valuable contribution towards understanding women's role in today's workforce. What also has to be considered alongside the analysis is the fluidity of women's labour market position over the past one hundred years. Neo-classical theory, although largely discounted for its individualism and its failure to adequately explain external factors in women's labour market disadvantage, provides a snap-shot of the position of women at the time. Labour market participation and educational attainment was low which led to the conclusions around women's poor human capital. However, it failed to offer any

alternative explanations other than a rational choice that most women made to invest in marriage and the home rather than in career development. The fact that many women had no choice was not considered and nor were power relationships.

Likewise, Marxist theories developed at the other end of the spectrum, grouping all women into a proletarianised class who were disadvantaged by the needs of capitalism and thrust into low paid work purely because of the needs of the capitalist economy to extract sufficient surplus value from every worker. It took little account of patriarchal forces that acted within and upon the labour market and failed to adequately explain why women constituted a disproportionate number of the lower paid. Later developments also overstated the role of the family in women's disadvantage but again, this needs to be looked at in the context when it was written when the role of the male breadwinner was more firmly embedded into society and into the workplace.

Feminism added considerably to the debate by introducing the concept of patriarchy and giving voice to the considerable disadvantages that women experienced because of their sex. Although there were disagreements between the different strands of feminism, all basically stood for the same goal – the emancipation of women and the evening out of society's blatant gender inequalities. Liberal feminism has been given little consideration in this chapter as it is not, in effect, a theory which can be applied to the labour market. However, its contribution should not be under-estimated in terms of the advances made in campaigns for policy and legislative changes that have greatly contributed to women's improved position today, for example, in terms of property rights, voting rights, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion and association (Tong, 2009:12)

Radical feminists moved away from the liberal standpoint to a more political agenda and some of their theories and practices were considered by many men and women to be disturbing (Bradley, 1996: 89). However, as Bradley rightly asserts, they were meant to be and, although their theories and tactics attracted extensive criticism, they laid the ground for further feminist study (ibid:89).

Marxist and socialist feminism sought largely to bolt-on theories of women's subjection to the existing Marxist theories of capitalist accumulation. Marxist feminism was also heavily criticised for its propensity to treat women as either part of the homogenised working classes or as housewives and clearly not all women fall into either of these categories. Their contribution was valuable in that it saw the beginnings of the development of an explanation of gender inequality that took into account external labour market forces. This however was an insufficient explanation of women's specific position within the labour force and hence the theories were developed further in order to provide an explanation on how capitalism and patriarchy both operated to ensure that women were largely excluded from certain occupations and segregated into low paid and under-valued positions.

Dual-systems theory was the result of this synthesis, providing an explanation on how patriarchy and capitalism, although separate systems, interact to the disadvantage of women. When considering the development of any specific occupation, this interaction is clear. Dual systems theory offers the most comprehensive explanation as to why the workforce is structured as it is. Clerical work probably provides one of the best examples of how capitalism and patriarchy both influenced women's position within the occupation with a resultant highly segregated workforce which remains today. The results of this early segregation are still evident. Women's skills continue to be under-valued and consequently pay and opportunities for advancement continue to be restricted. This is

especially true in a highly feminised area such as clerical work as research has shown that wages are depressed in occupations that contain a high percentage of women (Olsen and Walby, 2004:iv).

More recent feminist debate such as post-modernism have also been considered here. These explanations turned away from structuralist explanations to individualist perspectives of difference. However, although women will clearly not all have homogenised experiences, a purely individualist approach fails to account for identifiable trends in, for example, women's employment and are therefore inadequate for the purpose of this research. However, individual differences especially in terms of working hours have been given considerable consideration.

Finally, although dual systems theory provides the best analysis of how labour markets came to be structured, there is a need to examine why these structures prevail. Women in largely female occupations are not just disadvantaged by pay, they are also treated differently on a range of issues such as flexible working and terms and conditions of employment which are largely dependent on local arrangements. The experiences of women also vary depending on factors such as class, age, race and their domestic responsibilities. Old patriarchal theories tended to discount such individualism and, more recently, there have been attempts to include differences as well as sameness when studying gender and class. Walby's gender regimes do take into account different experiences but also recognise the existence of gendered social structures (Walby, 1997:6-7). Acker's account of inequality regimes provides a comprehensive account on how the systems of inequality are maintained through a variety of organisational processes (Acker, 2006).

Acker's model of inequality regimes will be used in the following account to illustrate how women in this occupational group are affected by a number of organisational structures, practices and processes that disadvantage them by reinforcing class and gender bias in a variety of ways. This was achieved in the empirical work by an examination on the experiences of the workgroup and an analysis of how organisational processes and structures worked to maintain this highly segregated and relatively low paid workforce. Although a research project of this size could not include an in-depth analysis of the multitude of inequalities, it recognises that gender alone does not explain disadvantage and attempts to consider the intersectionality of other causes of inequalities, such as class, age and domestic commitments.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the research strategy and philosophy adopted by the researcher and will outline the methods used for data collection and analysis. There will also be some discussion on the reliability and validity of the data collected and of the attempts made to reduce bias within the research. The research philosophy will also be outlined.

In its broadest sense this research is looking at gender inequality within a specific area of the UK workforce. The aim of the research is to examine segregation within a particular occupation and to examine how this segregation maintains and re-enforces gender and class inequality within the UK Higher Education System. As noted in Chapter 1, there has been very little research on this group of staff. Research on British Universities has tended to focus on the experiences of academics whilst ignoring other groups of workers. This research will begin to correct this by examining a large and predominantly female group of staff whose mere existence weakens any claim that the higher education sector has equality of opportunity.

The research question and methodological approach was shaped by the researcher's experiences within higher education. The researcher started work within higher education as a grade 3 secretary in 1994 and subsequently worked her way through the grades until reaching her current position as a grade 8, management and specialist role (previously called academic related staff). She was also a branch secretary for UNISON for many years and has remained active within the University and College Union following her transfer to an academic related grade.



There are, of course, risks of bias when researching one's own area of employment in that it may be 'difficult to stand back and adopt the role of objective observer' (Bell, 2010:194). Bell also warns against the potential dangers of researching one's own organisation as 'you will be familiar with the personalities, strengths and weaknesses of colleagues and this familiarity may cause you to overlook aspects of behaviour which would be immediately apparent to non-some-one seeing the situation for the first time' (Bell, 2010:194). The researcher was aware of this potential bias and made every effort to avoid it. There was little possibility for bias when analysing the questionnaire results as these were completed remotely and analysed electronically. When conducting interviews the researcher made a conscious effort not get into discussions on her opinion on or experiences within the higher education sector which may have lead the interviewee to provide answers that fit with the researchers opinions.

The role of the researcher within higher education also assisted with the interviews as there was an increased potential for reducing ambiguities as the researcher knew the sector well. There was also a greater potential for interviewees to open up to the researcher as a fellow member of the support team than they would an academic. This was felt to be an added advantage of the research.

The research has a large history section which examines how clerical work developed into the highly gender segregated occupation that is it today. The field research was designed to examine the effects of this continued segregation within higher education in terms of unequal opportunities in a range of areas including terms and conditions, promotion and career development and monetary rewards.

A multi-method approach was taken to the research, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods including a national questionnaire, participant

interviews, analysis of historical background information and, as the researcher is a member of university support staff and ex UNISON officer, an element of participant observation. The research plan was designed to optimise the amount of information that could be collected on the research group and it will be shown that this variety of methods have produced a substantial body of evidence and conclusions that improve the knowledge about this previously under-researched group.

### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

The research is essentially feminist in nature as it is looking at the experiences of women. Traditional social science research has been criticised for looking at men's experiences only (Harding, 1987:6). According to feminist critique understanding of women's roles in society was built upon 'unexamined assumptions about women which are then reproduced in our theories about society' (May,2011:18). For example, the human capital theorists claim that women were paid less as they were worth less (Mincer, 1962; Becker, 19915; Mincer and Polacheck, 1974) and Marxist analyses that consider women only as part of the working class and as a distinct group within their class (Marx, 1918). Although men and women do share workplace issues 'it is indisputable that gender has an important impact on many workplace relations' (Holgate et al,2006:310). Feminist research aims to change this male centred approach using methods:

"in which women's experiences, ideas and needs (different and differing as they may be) are valid in their own right and androcentricity – man-as-the-norm – stops being the only recognised frame of reference for human beings." (Klein, 1983:89)

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<sup>5</sup> This is later version, the original was published in 1971

Like social sciences in general, feminist perspectives are not simply a unified body of thoughts (May, 2011:18). However they do share common beliefs: that women and their contribution have been marginalised and this is reflected in research practice, that the norms of science perpetuate and disguise the myth of superiority of men over women and that gender has been absent from our understanding of social phenomena in favour of other categories such as class (ibid:18).

Feminism is both theory and practice and feminist researchers 'start with the political commitment to produce useful knowledge that will make a difference to women's lives through social and individual change' (Letherby, 2003:4). Consequently feminist research is one avenue to advance social change and feminist methodology can be described as encompassing three components:

“(1) a goal of social change for women through a production of knowledge that is for rather than on women; (2) the use of methods of attainment of this goal that are not oppressive; and (3) a continuous questioning of dominant intellectual paradigms and their developments”. (Miner et al, 2012:23).

In a similar vein Devault locates feminist methodology firstly as a method that will shift the focus of standard practice from men's concerns in order to reveal the locations and perspectives of women with the aim to 'bring women in'. The focus is to find out what has been suppressed, ignored and censored and to reveal both the diversity of women's lives and the ideological mechanisms that have made many of those lives invisible (Devault, 1996:32). Secondly, Devault emphasises the need to minimise harm and control in the research process and thirdly to seek a methodology that will support research of value to women leading to 'social change or action beneficial to women' (Devault, 1996:33).

However, she does admit that accomplishing change through feminist research and assessing whether it has occurred are quite difficult (ibid:34).

The research links to the theoretical framework throughout the thesis. Early examination of the history and clerical work and the clerical trade unions enabled examination of the dual influences of capitalism and patriarchy on the women who entered the profession. The analysis of the fieldwork data provided a contemporary view on how class and gender continue to work against clerical and administrative staff within university structures through the maintenance of inequality regimes which ensure the disadvantage of women on a number of levels. The maintenance of these class and gender based inequalities are further examined in the light of inequality regimes that operate across organisations at a number of levels.

### **3.3 Research Methods**

There has been considerable debate about whether there is a distinctive feminist method and many have argued against such a distinction (Harding, 1987:1; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002:15). However, how the methods are applied should encompass a feminist perspective. Although a feminist philosophy has been adopted in this research the methods used cannot be described as purely feminist methods. They do however fulfil the following criteria identified by Harding (1987) as integral to feminist research:

“They listen carefully to how women informants think about their lives and critically to how traditional social scientists conceptualise women and men’s lives. They observe behaviours of women and men that traditional social scientists have not thought

significant. They seek examples of newly recognised patterns of historical data”.

(Harding, 1987:2).

As well as being sensitive to the feminist philosophy in terms of the research there was also a need to collect a substantive amount of primary data. As previously mentioned, this workgroup has been largely ignored in any previous research in higher education and there was therefore very little information available on the demographics of the workforce or any detailed analysis of salaries. This provides the macro data and gives indications of ‘homogenising and unifying dynamics of gender and class in contemporary societies’ (Bradley,1999:37). However, the study also needed to consider the micro data, i.e. how these dynamics are manifested in local settings which required more qualitative techniques (ibid:37). Consequently a triangulation of research methods was used. In its broadest sense triangulation is described as ‘the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic’ (Olsen, 2004:2). Olsen argues that triangulation is not merely aimed at validation but at deepening and widening one’s understanding (ibid:1). This is the purpose of triangulation within this research.

Initial investigations into the occupational group did not uncover any substantial data on the group with HESA statistics only going back to 2003 and providing a limited snap-shot of the demographic characteristics of the group. It was therefore essential to obtain good quality quantitative data in order to build up an adequate picture of the research group. Jayaratne and Stewart suggest that “quantitative methods may never provide the kind of richly textured ‘feeling for the data’ that qualitative methods can” (Jayaratne and Stewart , 1991:23). However, quantitative data gathering was essential in order to collect previously unavailable information such as the qualifications of the group, the length of service, age, the domestic responsibilities and hours of work. Much of this was acquired

by a national questionnaire which included a section entitled 'Background Information' in order to obtain information on the demographic makeup of the occupational group. This provides the first detailed background information on this particular group of workers. The quantitative data was also able to identify trends in areas such as salary differentials, working hours and promotions which could be used to establish potential areas of inequality that could then be explored further in the qualitative data. The researcher had the support of UNISON, the organising union for this sector of staff, which enabled the distribution of the national questionnaire.

The experiences of this group were also essential to the success of the research and hence qualitative methods were used extensively. 'Qualitative' methods are usually taken to mean unstructured or semi-structured interviewing, participant observation, ethnography, focus groups, life histories and other approaches that involve researchers actively 'listening' to what the researched say" (Oakley, 1999:155). The strength of qualitative data collection is in its potential to explore identified themes in detail and to provide a richness of data that cannot be gleaned from quantitative data. Qualitative methods have a profound impact on research in the employment relationships (Whipp, 1998:51). In this survey it was essential that the experiences of secretarial and clerical staff within their organisations was analysed in some detail in order to establish specific areas of inequalities that the quantitative data had established. The qualitative data obtained in the research was quite extensive and included the analysis of documentary evidence, qualitative data from the questionnaires and interviewing of subjects.

### 3.4 Documentary evidence

The thesis contains a good proportion of historical evidence and this was obtained through the use of documentary evidence, both primary and secondary. Primary documents are those written during the period under examination whereas secondary documents are written after the event and include books, theses and journal articles (Patmore, 1998:219). The difficulty that immediately became apparent in this research was the lack of both primary and secondary documents relating to this group of staff. Very few researchers of higher education even give reference to this occupational group and those that do are, in the main, Australian researchers (Eveline, 2004; Castleman and Allen, 1995). When tracing the history of secretaries and clerks as a whole, there initially appeared to be a wealth of secondary sources (Lockwood, (1958); Anderson, (1976); Klingender, (1935). However, there was a distinct trend within this literature to look at the group from a male point of view especially when considering trade union organisation and development. (See Chapter 4 for the history of the National Union of Clerks). The feminist philosophy of this research aimed to change this and instead tell the story from a female point of view. The information for this was mainly obtained from the extensive archives of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries, held at Salford University's Working Class Movements Library. The archives here go back from the day of the birth of this all-female union and clearly show, where secondary interpretations fail, how hard the female clerks fought both for recognition by their employers and from their male colleagues. These original documents include minutes, newspaper articles, correspondence and regular newsletters. The records kept by the union were extensive, articulate and well presented. Unsurprisingly from a union of clerks and secretaries all were typewritten and easy to read and decipher. This is fortunate as some minute books from early trade unions are filled with poor spelling and grammar (Patmore, 1998:221). Such was the quality and

substance of the archive there was a need to reduce the temptation to include too much material which would have changed the research focus to an historical account of the trade union. Instead the researcher had to be selective and include the most relevant material. This material is included in historical analysis given in Chapter 4.

More recent historical evidence was found in the archives of Warwick University. These pertain to the trade union recognition of non-teaching staff from 1965-1968 and extracts from this archive are included in Chapter 4. The information held here is not as detailed as the archives for the Union of Women Clerks and Secretaries. Neither is it specifically about female secretaries within British Universities but is more generalist and some of the record of union participation in the sector fails to distinguish between clerical and manual occupations. However, a best attempt has been made to extract relevant data that shows the early struggles for the group to become part of national pay bargaining and to organise effectively.

Other documentary evidence on contemporary higher education included the examination of twelve individual University's role profiles, job evaluation schemes and equal opportunities statements. These are referred to at various points throughout the thesis. The names of the individual universities remain anonymous at the request of Keele University's Research Ethics Committee.

### **3.5 Survey evidence**

Survey research generally refers to research that is conducted using questionnaires to collect data which is then interpreted in numerical format and analysed statistically (Miner et al, 2012:237). Industrial relations as a field of study has benefited enormously from the



development of large-scale surveys based on statistically representative samples (Millward, Marginson and Callus, 1998:135) and workplace surveys offer advantages over other methods by permitting a wider range of questions to be asked (Whitfield, Delbridge and Brown, 1998:194). Surveys have also been recognised as having advantages for feminist research. Miner et al report that surveys can be helpful for 'understanding how particular attitudes, behaviours or experiences are distributed or associated with a population, which can then determine the best course of action in implementing social change for women' Miner et al (2012:243). There are also advantages of using statistics from survey evidence which 'may facilitate disseminating findings to non-feminists, the lay public and policy makers', as the brevity of numerical information makes it easy to report (Miner et al, 2012: 243). This questionnaire aimed to fulfil both of the above. There was a real need to obtain background information on the work group which was not available in documentary evidence and there was also a desire on behalf of the researcher to give this neglected group of workers a voice initially by collection of survey evidence on attitudes and experiences of the workgroup. The support of UNISON precipitated the use of a national survey for this research. Without UNISON's support such a large-scale survey would have been beyond the financial means of the project.

As the questionnaire was distributed by UNISON it was mainly restricted to union members. However, it was hoped that some of these members would pass the questionnaire on to colleagues in order to obtain the opinions of some non-members and to ascertain reasons why they had chosen not to join UNISON. When the results were analysed 13.7 per cent of the respondents claimed to be non-union members so it was clear that the questionnaire had been passed on. UNISON represents a broad range of staff across the higher education sector as well as clerks and secretaries. These include cleaners, ground staff, security staff, catering staff and in some cases technical staff.

Unfortunately the database at UNISON headquarters only distinguished between the occupational groups of staff who had joined the union within the three years prior to the distribution of the questionnaires. After consultation with the Head of Higher Education at UNISON the researcher concluded that distributing questionnaires only to staff who were more likely to have a short service history could present potential problems in terms of bias due to lack of information on the experiences of older, long serving members. Consequently the questionnaires were sent out randomly to members across the sector with the recognition that many of those who received them would not fall into the occupational group under study. This was explained to recipients in a covering letter from UNISON. The method of selection was therefore completely random. With random sampling there is almost no opportunity for human bias as the participants are not selected on any subjective criteria (Bryman, 2008:152). It is however useful as it enables generalisations to be made from the findings to that specific population (Bruins, 1998:91).

The questionnaire was designed using the Spinx software which also facilitated the input and the analysis of the results. Because of the size of the study and the number of variables being considered mainly closed, factual questions were used in the questionnaire giving respondents a choice of answers for each question. Factual questions are “designed to elicit objective information from the respondents regarding their background which can then be used to classify the respondents” (Jayaratne and Stewart, 1991:251). However, other questions called for the respondents to provide an opinion or give further details on their experiences designed to question the respondents “subjective experience including beliefs, attitudes, feelings and opinions” (Jayaratne and Stewart, 1991:252).

‘Questionnaires do not emerge fully-fledged; they have to be created or adapted, fashioned and developed to maturity after many abortive test flights’ (Oppenheim, 1992:45). The first few drafts of the questionnaire were amended following comments from the supervisor and from UNISON. Feedback was also obtained at a Keele University PhD workshop from fellow PhD students and academic staff. The questionnaire was then piloted within two universities. The piloting exercise highlighted some ambiguities in the questions, some typographic errors and also some questions where potential responses were missing, for example, ‘What type of higher education institution do you work in?’ failed to include the Open University in its list of options. All comments were taken into consideration and changes made before the final draft was e-mailed to UNISON for distribution. Unfortunately even after twelve drafts an error still remained. The question ‘Which best describes your household situation?’ gave the options of sole-earner, main earner or secondary earner. As many respondents pointed out this should have included ‘joint earner’. However, this omission did not fundamentally change the results of the questionnaires.

The questionnaire then had to be submitted to the University’s Research Ethics Committee for ethical approval. Ethical issues in social research are both important and ambiguous (Babbie, 2010:75). However, ethical consideration and approval is essential in any research. Ethical guidelines and committees are there to protect research participants and also institutions as, if a researcher were to behave unethically this could cause potential problem for the institution such as legal action or adverse publicity (Bryman, 2008:117). It is therefore essential that all research meets certain ethical criteria and there are four main areas which all researchers need to give ethical consideration to (Bryman, 2008:117). These are to ensure that no harm comes to the participants; that individuals taking part in the research have given their informed consent; that there has

been no invasion of privacy (ie anonymity and confidentiality have been maintained and that deception has been avoided (Bryman, 2008:117). The Ethics Committee found no potential ethical problems with the questionnaire: participation was voluntary and there was no obligation to provide contact details. Obviously the completion of a questionnaire could not result in harm to the participant or deception on behalf of the researchers. Consequently, following some minor changes in the wording of some questions, approval was granted for the questionnaire to be distributed. A copy of this final questionnaire is available in Appendix A.

The questionnaires were distributed from UNISON's Head Office and included a letter from UNISON (See Appendix B); a letter from the researcher (Appendix C) and a pre-paid return envelope to UNISON. The use of postal questionnaires can be extremely advantages during any large scale research as the cost of data collection and processing is relatively low; interviewer bias can be avoided and they can reach respondents who live at widely dispersed addresses (Oppenheimer, 1992:102). However, as in all forms of data collection, there are disadvantages too. One of the most widely recognised disadvantages is the generally low response rates for such survey and the potential for consequent bias (Oppenheimer, 1992:102; Millward, Marginson and Callus, 1998:135). 4,500 questionnaires were distributed. The response rate was 16.6 per cent which, although not high, was a good rate of return given that there was the potential for many of the questionnaires to reach occupational groups who were not included in the survey. This is a respectable return from a large scale national survey and is sufficient to inspire confidence in the reliability of the results and the ability to generalise these results across the occupational group as a whole. One reminder was sent out to the potential respondents asking them to return the questionnaire. However, apart from that there was

nothing more that could be done to increase the response rate given the time and size of the survey.

The results were input into Sphinx by the researcher which took considerable time but allowed for the researcher to become familiar with the data and to read all the additional comments that had been included on the questionnaires. As the data was input, subjects who had volunteered to be interviewed were also identified.

The table overleaf provides information of the demographic make-up of the respondents. Although these statistics are analysed in more details in Chapters 6 - 8, a brief resume was required to provide an initial test of how representative the sample was of the national workforce and also to give an over-view of the sample. To summarise, as expected the sample is predominantly female with only 13.5 per cent of respondents being male. The group is also an aging one with the majority of both male and female respondents in the older age brackets (41 years and over). There was a good geographical spread and also fairly equal representation from both the new and old universities. Furthermore, when these statistics were compared to the most recent HESA statistics for 2010-11 (HESA, 2012) it was clear that they were broadly reflective of the national profile of the occupational group. For example, 86.5 per cent of the respondents to the survey were female and 84 per cent of the clerical and secretarial staff nationally are female (HESA, 2012). In using feminist methodologies there is the risk of relativism (Harding, 1987:10). This has been avoided in this research as both men and women were included in the survey and interviews. Although the number of men in the occupation is small, as are the number in this survey, the comparative analysis afforded by the inclusion of male subjects enhances the validity of the research's results and conclusions. Across the sector 39.5% of clerical staff work part-time. (HESA, 2012: Table A). Therefore, in this respect the

sample is less reflective of the national picture as whole. This may be because the questionnaire went mainly to UNISON members and full-time staff are more likely to be trade union members (Department for Business and Innovative Skills, 2010:24). Nationally for administrative and clerical workers 21.8 per cent of full-time workers are trade union members compared to only 8.4 per cent of part-time workers (ibid). Consequently, as this questionnaire was distributed mainly to UNISON members it is not surprising that a relatively small percentage worked part-time.

2.9 per cent of the sample claimed to have a disability compared to 3.6 per cent nationally (HESA, 2012:Table A); and both 12 per cent of the sample and of the national group declared themselves to be of an ethnic minority. This gave the researcher confidence that the sample was generally representative of the overall workgroup.

**Table 3.1: Characteristics of survey respondents**

	Number	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	99	13.5%
Female	624	85.1%
Non-response	10	1.4%
Age:		
Under 20	1	0.1%
21 – 30	54	7.4%
31 – 40	158	22.9%
41 – 50	216	29.5%
51 – 60	256	34.9%
61 or over	36	4.9%
Non-response	2	0.3%
Race:		
White British	646	88.1%
Other white European	35	4.8%
White, other	17	2.3%
Black African	0	0%
Black other	7	1%
Mixed race	8	1.1%
Asian	14	1.9%
Other	4	0.5%
Non-response	2	0.3%

Disabled		
Yes	21	2.9%
No	707	96.5%
Non-response	5	0.6%
Household situation		
Sole earner	183	25%
Main earner	167	22.8%
Secondary earner	361	49.2%
Other	13	1.8%
Non-response	9	1.2%
Caring responsibilities		
No	432	58.9%
Yes, children under 12 years	130	17.7%
Yes, children over 12 years	107	14.6%
Yes, disabled relative	32	4.4%
Yes, elderly relative	74	10.1%
Non-response	6	0.8%
Type of institution		
Pre 1992	343	46.8%
Post 1992 (ex polytechnic)	292	39.8%
Post 1992 (ex HE college)	66	9%
Open University	20	2.7%
Non-response	12	1.6%
Location of institution		
Scotland	47	6.4%
Wales	40	5.5%
North West England	124	16.9%
North East England	121	16.5%
West Midlands	55	7.5%
East Midlands	74	10.1%
South West England	55	7.5%
South East England	116	10.1%
Greater London	81	15.8%
Yorkshire	6	0.8%
Non-response	14	1.9%
Working hours		
Full-time	530	72.3%
Part-time	192	27%
Non-response/other	5	0.7%
Type of contract		
Permanent	673	91.8%
Fixed term	25	3.4%
Temporary	5	0.7%
Casual	1	0.1%
Non-response	29	4%
Salary		
Below £5,000	3	0.4%

£5,001 - £11,000	41	5.6%
£11,001 - £14,000	61	8.3%
£14,001 - £18,000	169	23.1%
£18,001 - £22,000	221	30.2%
£22,001 - £26,000	124	16.9%
Over £26,000	104	14.2%
Non-response	10	1.4%

Source: Questionnaire results

‘Descriptive statistics were used to summarise and analyse the data. However, descriptive statistics have their limitations in that they describe only what is going on in a specific data set whereas inferential statistics make it possible to generalise beyond the data’ (Halfoms and Meijers, 2013:1). Therefore, any future publications of specific parts of the thesis may require more inferential analysis.

### **3.6 Interview evidence**

‘Interviews are the primary means of accessing the experiences and subjective views of actors’ (Whipp, 1998:54). Interviews offer the opportunity to discuss issues in more depth and, unlike survey research, they include the opportunity for clarification and discussion (Reinharz et al, 1992:18). Interviewing is a powerful research tool for feminist researchers exploring women’s experiences and the context that organises their experience (DeVault and Gross, 2012:229). However, interviews are time consuming and it was known at the start of this research that this would limit the number of interviews that could be conducted. Interviewing is also highly subjective and there is always the danger of bias (Bell,2010:161).

However, in spite of the potential pitfalls, it was felt that the interviews were essential in order to build on the key themes that had been identified from the analysis of the



questionnaires. The postal questionnaire included a final question asking whether the respondents would be willing to be interviewed and inviting them to provide their contact details. One hundred and sixty three people expressed their willingness to be interviewed. Obviously, due to time and monetary constraints it was not possible to interview all volunteers and interviewees were selected based on accessibility and in order to give as fair a representation of the sample as possible. Again, before interviews could commence ethical approval was again obtained through the Research Ethics Committee at Keele University and following their recommendations the informed consent form was amended. A copy of the informed consent form is available in Appendix D. As well as informed consent there are other ethical considerations that researchers must abide by when interviewing. Interviews need to be conducted in a way that is sensitive to participants concerns and feelings and identities need to be protected, by the use of pseudonyms if necessary (DeVault and Gross, 2012:225). Although assurances had been given that the identity of the individuals would remain anonymous, the Ethics Committee asked for guarantees that the employers of the interviewees would also remain anonymous when reporting on the interviews. This assurance was given and approval was granted. In total 30 people were interviewed. 24 of these were volunteers who had been identified from the questionnaires and 6 were not currently clerical and secretarial but had started their careers as clerical staff and risen through the grades to the higher management and specialist grades. These were contacted via the researcher's association with a professional organisation and through internal contacts. Attempts were made to interview as representative a sample as possible taking into account the geographical spread and demographics of the sample group. The characteristics of the interview sample are shown in Appendix E.

Interviewing techniques can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Structured interviews allow the interviewee to tick or circle responses on a prepared schedule which are then fairly easy to record, summarise and analyse (Bell, 2010: 162). This method was discounted as the questionnaire had already provided a substantial amount of structured information that could easily be analysed and in the majority of cases background information of the interviewee was already available from the questionnaire. The purpose of the interviews was to build on this and to really explore the experiences of the staff group. Unstructured interviews on the other hand may produce a wealth of valuable data around a particular topic but require a great deal of expertise to control and a great deal of time to analyse (Bell, 2010:164). It was therefore decided to deploy the use of semi-structured interviews or 'guided or focused' interview techniques (Bell, 2010:165). This involved deciding upon a framework for discussion by selecting topics on which the interview is guided giving the respondent 'a considerable degree of latitude within the framework' (Bell, 2010:165). The advantage of this type of interview over completely unstructured interviews is that the established framework allows for the simplification of recording and analysis which is particularly important for time-limited studies such as this one (Bell, 2010:165).

There are however disadvantages to semi-structured interviews and a number of issues to be considered to ensure the reliability and validity of the data is not compromised. Semi-structured interviews can be time consuming and, given the researcher was a part-time student in full-time employment this was a major consideration. The interviews themselves took between one and two hours and for some travelling time also needed to be factored in. It was therefore very important that the interviews were well organised and, for example, when travel was involved, the interviews were grouped into geographical area and arranged for the same time. This in itself was very time consuming

as a number of individuals' availability had to be synchronised. Due to the wide geographical spread of the interviewees 12 of the interviews were conducted over the telephone. However, it was felt that these were less successful and elicited less in depth information as the opportunity to develop a rapport with the interviewee was limited. With all interviews there is also the risk of what has been described as the 'interviewer effect' as research has shown that people respond differently depending on how they perceive the person asking the questions (Denscombe, 2010:178). The interviewer explained to all interviewees her position as a member of university support staff and her trade union activism. It was felt that this was important to foster a feeling of shared experience especially when talking about the academic/support staff divide. It was felt that interviewees would not have felt they could be as honest about that if they assumed the interviewer was an academic. There is also the danger of bias when interviewing and this can occur either deliberately or unwittingly (Bell, 2010:169). Researchers who have particularly strong views on a topic can be prone to bias and it was extremely important for the interviewer to ensure that the interviewees were not led in certain directions when talking about their experiences. The interviewer was also acutely aware of the need to be wise, vigilant and critical of the interpretation of the data (Bell, 2010:169) and not to ignore information that did not fit into her perceptions of the issues.

The provision of misinformation and the subsequent accuracy of the findings (i.e. the reliability and validity of the data) is also a cause for vigilance when conducting interviews. Reliability and validity have been described as the 'gold standard' for demonstrating research quality (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013:479). Validity basically means that the research findings are strong and the researcher can demonstrate that they are true (ibid:479). Reliability means that the results should be consistent and repeatable (ibid:479). Ensuring reliability and validity is somewhat easier with quantitative data. For

example, in this research the statistics for the research sample was broadly comparable to the national HESA data. Ultimately there are no absolute ways of verifying what someone tells you but there are some practical checks that could be used to gauge the credibility of the information (Denscombe, 2012:188). This was achieved in this study by checking the information received against other interviews to look for consistency as an idea or issue which is shared among a wider group enables the researcher to refer to it with greater confidence than if it stemmed from the word of one individual (Denscombe, 2012:190). Common themes were identified throughout the interviews which lead the interviewer to feel fairly confident that the data was robust and valid.

The interviews took place over nine months and centred on a number of key themes. The question schedule is included in Appendix F although not all questions were asked of all interviewees. Care was taken not to ask any leading or presumptive questions and the order of the questions was considered to ensure that earlier questions were easier 'ice breaker' type questions such as 'How many years have you worked in the sector?' and 'where did you work before?'. This order may be important in establishing an easy relationship with the interviewee (Bell, 2010:162). The main aim of the interviews was for the subjects to talk about their experiences within higher education and, particularly for those with long service, to provide an historical narrative of the changes they have seen during their careers within the sector. This was found to be particularly useful given the lack of written accounts of the development of the workgroup. Contact was initially made by e-mail where possible and followed up by either a telephone interview at an appointed time or by arranging to meet, usually at the place of work of the interviewee. This itself was time consuming as many potential interviewees did not respond to requests for interview and alternatives had to be found. Where possible the interview was confirmed in

writing and a copy of the informed consent form was sent for the interviewee to peruse prior to the meeting.

At the start of each interview the interviewees were introduced to the researcher's background and the aims of the study and the informed consent form was signed and collected. Most of the interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees and written notes were also taken. Some interviewees stated that they felt uncomfortable being recorded and notes were taken instead. There was some flexibility in the questions and occasions when certain lines of questioning quickly became 'shut down' and there was a need to change track. However, in the main the interviewees were engaging and informative and an excellent rapport was apparent between interviewer and interviewee.

The recordings were then replayed by the interviewee who made detailed notes and quotations in an interview diary. These were then grouped together under common themes to enable them to be analysed along with other data collection, for example from the questionnaire and to be included in chapters 6 to 8 which analyse the research findings.

### **3.8 Conclusions**

The methods chosen have been done so in order to obtain the widest and deepest amount of information possible given the time constraints of the research. The variety of methods also makes it easier to avoid bias in the research. Bias has been avoided in the survey data by the use of a randomised sample. The only possible skewing of the survey results is the fact that it only went to UNISON members although some non-members were captured by the survey. The size of the survey also meant that the results could be

interpreted as reflective of the national workgroup and this was reinforced by the comparisons that were made to the available HESA data.

The documentary evidence on the specific research group was very sparse and was recognised by the researcher as a potential weakness when writing some of the background and historical chapters. However, this reinforces one of the major assertions of the research that this group of staff is 'invisible' within the higher education system and this is one of the major reasons for the lack of consideration afforded to them in higher education policy.

In two areas the research is limited. The first is in the analysis of race within the group. Only 12 per cent of those surveyed were of ethnic minority and this under-representation is an issue for concern even though it is reflective of the national ethnic make-up of the group. However, it was not possible within the remit and time constraints of the research to give their particular issues the attention they deserve. Issues of age discrimination was not included in the research for similar reasons stated above although it was clear that many of the older respondents did feel that their age hampered their career developments. Given the age profile and length of service of the respondents it is also recognised that this is a potential issue that warrants further investigation.

However, overall the variety of methods used and the number of individuals who have participated has provided a useful insight into the characteristics, work histories and concerns of this large, and previously largely ignored, section of the higher education workforce.

## **Chapter 4 – Early History and Development of Clerical Work.**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Clerical work is probably the best example of an occupation that has changed its sex label completely and quickly (Anderson, 1988:2). At the same time some argue there has been suggestion of a 'proletarianisation of clerical work' (Crompton and Jones, 1984:1). Consequently clerical work has become the 'contemporary prototype of a female job ghetto.....low grade, low paid and dead end' (Lowe, 1987:1).

This chapter will examine the early development of clerical work from the 1850s until the 1950s charting the rapid expansion and feminisation of the occupation. The first section will examine the scant evidence available on the early clerical workers, their social standing and their class identification. Section two will chart the rapid expansion of clerical work from 1850-1911, the early stirrings of white collar trade-unionism and the first female clerical workers. The final section will look at the growth of the occupation through the first half of the Twentieth Century with specific reference to the feminisation of the occupation and the growth of the clerical trade unions. What little information is available on clerical and secretarial staff within higher education is also included.

### **4.2 Early clerical workers**

There is very little information available about the first clerical workers, but what is available suggests that they were attached to the Church as Parish clerks, hence the title 'clerk' or 'clerical worker'. The history to the Parish clerk's office can be traced from early Saxon times as an assistant of the parish priest (Ditchfield, 1907:16). Ditchfield reports

that the Bishop of Grosseteste (1235-53) laid down the injunction that 'in every church of sufficient means there shall be a deacon or sub-deacon; but in the rest a fitting and honest clerk to serve the priest in a comely habit' (ibid:17). These early Parish clerks performed mainly ecclesiastical duties and were often poor scholars who were trained to serve in the church and parish and who might ultimately attain to the ministry (Ibid:31). Duties of the medieval clerk included opening the church doors, ringing the day-bell, singing in the choir and ensuring security of hymn books, chalice and church. He also kept the bells in order, tended to the lamps (Ibid:37) and later took the role of organist (Ibid: 225) and letter writer (Ibid:6). When, from 1536 Thomas Cromwell ordered the keeping of registers, it was often parish clerks who were responsible for the facts recorded (Ibid:140). Although by the time that Ditchfield published his account of Parish clerks in 1907 the occupation was virtually extinct, the title clerk, the task of record keeper and letter writer were firmly established as an occupation.

Dale (1962) also reports that medieval clerks were attached to the church. New skills were acquired during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries such as double entry book-keeping and clerks enjoyed a 'fair degree of security, if not affluence, as a servant of the rising merchant classes' (Ibid:1). Dale asserts that this security and affluence continued until the mid-19th Century. However, there is still meagre information about the nature of clerical work between the 1850s and 1880s (Lockwood, 1958:19). What little is known is documented in novels of the time, particularly Dicken's accounts of the counting houses in work such as 'Christmas Carol' where the clerk 'sat in a dismal little cell beyond.....copying letters' (Dickens, 2003:1)<sup>6</sup>. Anderson (1976) Klingender (1935) and Lockwood (1958) provide the few detailed accounts of the world of the clerks of the 1800s providing evidence to suggest that the occupation was initially monopolised by educated,

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<sup>6</sup> Taken from a later version. The original was published in 1843.



middle-class men. Indeed, many early clerks performed duties which today would be classed as managerial and although banking, the civil service and insurance produced a prosperous type of clerk, the greater proportion were on salaries no higher than the artisans of the time (Lockwood, 1958:20). This produced an 'immense range of remuneration of functions that were termed clerical' (Ibid:22). Consequently comparison of what little data is available on salaries is shaky as the definition of clerking activities changes over time (Crompton and Jones, 1984:18). However, although much of the work was routine with the clerk responsible for 'correspondence, filing, elementary book keeping and routine office matters' (Lockwood, 1958:20) a certain standard of education was expected and those embarking on a clerical career 'would find it sufficient to have a little instruction in Latin, and probably a little Greek, a little in Geography, a little in Science, a little in arithmetic and book-keeping, a little in French and such a sprinkling of English reading as may enable a lad to distinguish Milton from Shakespeare' (Lockwood, 1958:20). Consequently most clerks were superior in social background to other workers (Anderson, 1988:3). Described by Lockwood (1958) as 'blackcoated workers', these early clerks were all men with relatively high earnings compared with manual workers and with opportunities for upward mobility (Anderson, 1988:3).

Typically the Victorian counting house was small and employers and clerks worked in close proximity (Anderson, 1976:10). For many, a clerical apprenticeship was seen as the first stage in a career of upward mobility and improved status (Anderson, 1976:15). Although the degree of upward mobility varied considerably between firms and trades this, along with greater job security, differentiated clerks from manual and even skilled workers (Ibid:22). Although the lower paid clerks were never really part of the middle class in an economic sense they were always striving socially to identify themselves with it (Lockwood, 1958:22) and considered themselves to be superior in terms of social status

(Anderson, 1976:108). One of the dominating features of the early clerical consciousness was the concept of the 'gentleman' (Lockwood, 1958:29). Although many clerks were not particularly well paid the environment of the counting house was generally conducive to their estrangement from the mass of workers and to their identification with the entrepreneurial and professional classes (Lockwood, 1958:34). Many early clerks were drawn from middle class or socially aspiring artisan families whose education, working conditions and dress distinguished them from other workers and aligned them with the master class with whom they worked with in a 'close and personal relationship' (Lockwood, 1958:34). Businesses were generally small and there was 'almost a feudal relationship between the small number of clerks to be found in such offices and their employers. 'The clerk was more a family servant than a wage labourer' (Klingender, 1935:2). They were, as a class, 'fragmented and isolated in small groups in a great many offices and businesses' (Lockwood, 1958:32). Lockwood claims that 'all but the most biased observers of the class system must recognise that although he shares the propertylessness of the manual worker the clerk has never been strictly 'proletarian' in terms of income, job security and occupational mobility' (ibid:204).

Certainly trade unionism was not popular amongst the clerks as they saw it as a means by which the labouring classes were beginning to raise their standards of living (Lockwood, 1958:22). Lockwood concludes that it was not the economic position of the clerks that resulted in their failure to take concerted action but their role in the division of labour of the office and by their position in the hierarchy of social rank in society at large (ibid:34). Trade unions were considered purely working class institutions and if clerks were to join then the status separation between them and the working classes would be undermined (Anderson, 1976:108). Additionally, the early offices estranged clerical workers from the mass of working men and in these early years many office workers were from middle class

families, better educated and dressed, with better working conditions and the possibility of advancement. 'If economically they were sometimes in the margin, socially they were definitely a part of the middle class' (Lockwood, 1958:35). Klingender reports that only in rare instances did clerks 'recognise that only the fighting methods of the class to which they were being economically reduced could bring an improvement in their position' (Klingender 1935:17). Consequently it was not until the late 19th that the early developments of clerical trade unionism became apparent, initially in the railways and national and local government (Anderson, 1976:108).

Accusations of a false class consciousness were however often levelled at the clerks (Lockwood, 1958:14) but until the 1880s this relatively small scale, male dominated world prevailed with male clerks pursuing careers 'mostly untroubled by serious competition in the labour market or changes in the organisation and technology of office work' (Anderson, 1976:4). However, this was about to change as demographic and social changes, along with the shift towards monopoly capitalism, were to change the role of the Victorian clerk beyond recognition.

#### **4.3 The expansion and feminisation of clerical work, 1850 - 1911**

Marx predicted the growth of the clerical labour force, employed to administer the expanding capitalist economy:

"The office is from the outset always infinitesimally small compared to the industrial workshop. As for the rest, it is clear that as the scale of operations is extended, commercial operations are required constantly for the circulation of industrial capital. In order to sell the product existing as commodity capital, to reconvert the money so received into means of production, and to keep account of the whole process

multiply accordingly. Calculation of prices, book-keeping, managing funds, correspondence — all belong under this head. The more developed the scale of production, the greater, even if not proportionately greater, the commercial operations of the industrial capital, and consequently the labour and other costs of circulation involved in realising value and surplus value. This necessitates the employment of commercial wage workers who make up the actual office staff... The commercial worker produces no surplus value directly... The capitalist increases the number of these labourers whenever he has more value and profits to realise. The increase of this labour is always a result, never a cause of more surplus-value". (Marx, 2012:352)<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, the latter part of the 19th century saw a dramatic increase in both the number of clerks and the nature of the environment in which they worked (Anderson (1976), Lockwood (1958), McKenna (1987) Klingender (1935). It is clear that by the end of the 19th century the 'new, specifically capitalist, character of clerical employment had become the dominant element' (Klingender, 1935:13). However, remnants of the older personal relationship still persisted (Klingender, 1935:13) and there is no sharp dividing line between the counting house and modern day office, only a gradual development of the administrative unit in terms of size, equipment and mode of organisation (Lockwood, 1958:36).

The demographic make-up of the occupation also changed dramatically during the latter 19th and early twentieth centuries becoming younger and increasingly feminised. Klingender quotes that in the banking industry in 1911 46.6 % of clerks were under 25 compared with 28.8 % of the total male occupied population (Klingender, 1935:19). Clerking also began to lose its exclusive male orientation after the middle of the 19th century (Bridger, 2003:100). Over the fifty years from 1861 – 1911 the number of clerks increased by 87%; male clerks increased by 84% and female clerks by 98%. Although

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<sup>7</sup> This is a later version of the original work which was published in 1904

men still outnumbered women by 1911 the number of female office workers was growing at a far more rapid pace. Not only did the size and gender composition of the clerical labour force change but also the social origins of the clerks (Crompton and Jones, 1984:19).

**Table 4.1: Number of Clerks Employed in England and Wales, 1861-1911**

Year	All clerks employed	Men		Women	
		Number	% of all clerks employed	Number	% of all clerks employed
1861	92,012	91,733	99.7	297	0.3
1871	130,717	129,271	98.9	1446	1.1
1881	236,125	229,295	97.3	6,420	2.7
1891	370,433	351,486	94.9	18,947	5.1
1901	518,900	461,164	88.9	57,736	11.1
1911	685,998	561,155	81.9	124,843	18.1

Source: Holcombe 1973:210

This section will examine the reasons behind the rapid feminisation of the clerical workforce, namely the development of monopoly capitalism; the 'excess' number of females during the period; and the demand from women for educational and workplace opportunities. It will also look at the growth of white collar trade unionism and the beginnings of de-skilling and subsequent development of the white-collar proletariat (Crompton and Jones, 1984).

On the demand side, this spectacular increase in the demand for clerical labour was caused by the position of London as the world's international financial centre and structural changes in the economy (Anderson, 1976:52). Although the small counting houses persisted well into the twentieth century offices were generally getting 'larger and more complex' (Holcombe, 1973:141) leading to the creation of hierarchies and organisational complexities (Simonton, 1998:234). The development of monopoly capitalism saw a sub-division of labour and the 'extraordinary enlargement of those

enterprises which entirely separate from the process of production, carried on their activities either chiefly or entirely through clerical labour' (Braverman, 1974:300). Amalgamations, particularly in the banking industry, also concentrated capital (McKenna, 1987:29). Between 1862 and 1902 two hundred private banks merged and the banking industry became dominated by a few firms operating nationally with a corresponding increase in the number of banking clerks from 15,966 to 30,069 (McKenna, 1987:38). In these banks, and many other industries such as advertising and publishing, the development of capital transformed the operating function of the capitalist from a personal activity, as in the old counting house days, into the work of a mass of people (Braverman, 1974:301). This rapid expansion of capitalist production and trade in the latter part of the 19th century lead to a large growth in the number of clerks but also radically changed the relationship between clerk and proprietor forever (Klingender, 1935:17); (Braverman, 1974:303).

The vastly enhanced function of government also increased the demand for clerical workers and compulsory elementary education introduced in the last decades of the 19th century extended the field from which clerical workers were recruited (Lockwood, 1958:36-37). In 1900 the role of the municipal worker for Hammersmith Vestry was described thus:

"Documents which had to be duplicated were written in violet ink and impressed on jelly in a tray... Typewriters did not come out until much later.....Most of the older officers wore top hats and frock coats, and all juniors were expected to wear dark suits, high stiff collars and starched cuffs, black boots and bowler hats...There were no women on the staff and we had few visits from the public..."(Spoor, 1967:4).

This was to change beyond recognition over the next decades as the intimate associations, atmosphere of mutual obligation and degree of loyalty which characterised the small office became transformed. The era of the bookkeeper was over and the office manager became the 'prime functionary and representative of higher management' with a subsequent increase in control and scientific management (Braverman, 1974:303-306).

As demand increased companies sought an effective way to increase their workforce whilst keeping costs down. Traditionally male clerks were relatively highly paid and companies could not afford to rapidly increase their number in order to meet the demand. Consequently alternatives were sought and employers began to favour women for certain roles as they could pay them less and 'amongst the advantages that would accrue from the employment of women was the fact that the wages which would draw male operators from an inferior class of the community would draw female operators from a superior class' (Martindale, 1938:158). Consequently the educated, middle-class status of the clerk could be maintained, at least initially, but at a considerable lower cost to employers.

Although the recruitment of women into offices in Britain began slowly, after 1870 it grew rapidly between the turn of the century and 1911 (Lowe, 1987:17). In 1851 there were 'seventy or eighty thousand clerks' with nineteen women listed as commercial clerks and a 'sprinkling in other fields' (Lockwood, 1958:36). These early women clerks were truly pioneers as they were entering an almost exclusive male-dominated labour market (Anderson, 1988:3). Figure 4.1 shows the phenomenal growth in the number of female clerks from 297 in 1861 to 124,843 by 1911 (Holcombe, 1973:210).

On the supply side a growing number of middle-class Victorian women required work. A number of women were 'forced' out to work after 1850 following the loss of financial support from husbands or parents (Lowe, 1986:17) or actually chose to undertake paid employment. Late Victorian social theory drew a firm line between the public and private spheres and Victorian middle class women were certainly not encouraged to work. Marriage and motherhood were the careers marked out for women and their futures were firmly rooted in the home (Holcombe, 1973:1). Married women could not legally own property or control their earnings as these belonged to their husbands (Holcombe, 1973:1). The absence of women in offices during the mid-19th Century was not entirely due to factors such as poor education but these general conditions discouraged the employment of women (Holcombe, 1973:141). However, by the latter part of the 19th Century developments were afoot that were to mark the beginnings of massive changes in western women's roles in society. Industrialisation resulted in a change in household production with tasks such as spinning, weaving and clothes making moving to factory production. Additionally, increasing wealth amongst the middle classes allowed for the employment of domestic labour, nurses, governesses and tutors (Holcombe, 1973:4). Before the industrial revolution the family was an economic unit but women now found that much of their customary work was slipping from their hands leaving the middle-class housewife of the past a middle-class lady of leisure' (Holcombe, 1973:4).

The 1850s also saw the early stirrings of the Women's Movement. The 'English Woman's Journal' was published in early 1858 by a small group of liberal feminists known as the 'Ladies of Langham Place' (Holcombe, 1973:5). Described as 'first-wave feminists' they campaigned on a variety of women's issues such as the reform of the married women's property laws, improvement of secondary education for girls, the opening up of higher education for women and female suffrage (Holcombe, 1973:5). The Langham Place



Group was established by Barbara Leigh Smith and Bessie Rayner Parkes (Caine, 1997:93). The house at Langham Place not only provided offices from which the 'English Women's Journal' was published but also 'a space for teaching classes, a library, a dining room and facilities for a ladies club' (Caine, 1997:94). It played a leading role in recruiting women to the movement 'offering a base and social network for those increasing numbers of middle-class women who were feeling and expressing discontent with their own lives and opportunities' (Caine, 1997:94). Emily Faithful, Adelaide Proctor, Marie Rye and Jessie Boucheret soon became members of the group (Caine, 1997:94). Marie Rye set up an office copying documents; Emily Faithful established the Victoria Press and Adelaide Proctor and Jessie Boucher established the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (SPEW) in 1859 with the specific objective of promoting 'the employment of women in occupations suitable for their sex, by collecting and diffusing useful information on the subject, by establishing an office which shall be a centre of inquiry, by practically ascertaining the capacity of women for some of the occupations hitherto closed to them and by encouraging their better and more complete education' (Bridger, 2003:58). The Society still exists today as the Society for Promoting the Training of Women ([www.sptw/org](http://www.sptw/org)). One of the Society's main initial aims was to have women accepted into the clerical branch of the civil service (Bridger, 2004). They also set up the first commercial school to train women as book-keepers and arranged the first short-hand school for women ([www.sptw/org](http://www.sptw/org)).

The 19th century also saw the gradual development of state supported education for the lower classes (Holcombe, 1973:21). Middle-class women also struggled to improve the poor education they received in the mid-19th Century which 'explained their sad plight when they were forced to find work' (ibid:21). Although it was 1914 before England created a national system of public education (ibid:33) the latter part of the 19th Century

saw an improvement in the education of women and the lower classes. Progress was slow but eventually there were some improvements in women's access to basic education. Initially this was restricted to middle-class women and was pioneered by some notable women of the time. For example, Frances M Buss taught in her own private school which became the model for the High Schools of the Girl's Public Day School, established in 1872 to provide middle-class girls good schools at a moderate cost (Adamson, 1925:284) and to 'supply for girls the best possible education corresponding with the education given to boys in the great public schools of the day' (Ibid:334). Its first high schools were established in Chelsea (1873), Notting Hill and Croydon (1874) (Adamson, 1925:334). As early as 1860 Emily Davies was urging for more occupations to be opened up to women and for the improvement of women's education (ibid:326). Adamson credits the feminist movement in part for the expansion of female education (ibid:323). He also reports that in 1851 out of a population of eighteen million, three and a half million women were 'working for a subsistence of whom five seventh were unmarried' (Ibid:324). 'Middle-class prejudice against working women, their inferior education and the disabilities they suffered before the law tended to lower the rate of remuneration for women's work' (Ibid:324). Education was seen as one of the remedies for this situation and the right for education was taken up alongside the campaigns for the vote, and for improvement in women's rights under the law (Ibid:324).

There is evidence to suggest that early female clerks were well educated, middle class ladies, of similar social status to their male counterparts. Office work provided one of the few occupations that 'would not compromise a lady's gentility' (Hammerton, 1976:54) and was popular with Victorian ladies. Victorian feminist Maria Rye established a law copying office in Lincoln's Inn Fields and was 'inundated with applications, 810 for one position paying £15 a year' (ibid:55). Janet Courtney in her autobiography 'Recollected in

Tranquillity' reports of hearing of a temporary clerks vacancy at the Royal Commission on Labour who were seeking university women with a good knowledge of modern language (Courtney, 1926:134). Courtney herself was an Oxford educated daughter of a country reverend and was 'determined to get the post'. It was the mid 1890s and she was offered the post after translating a German book of over one hundred pages in one day (ibid:134). The employment of women in roles such as Courtney's was for purely economic reasons. She reports that good linguists were essential in the role and could have been found within higher grade men, but women were, to put it simply, cheaper even when paid the 'unheard-of salary (for a woman) of £3 a week' (ibid:134-135).

Clerical work was a field that mid Victorian feminists believed to be a field 'eminently suitable' for the employment of women (Holcombe, 1973:141). Zimmeck, reports that office work was considered 'not to cause any loss of feminine graces'; was 'dainty'; 'clean' and 'allowed women to dress nicely (Zimmeck, 1986:157). The work was not, however, very fulfilling for the early, well-educated female clerks as Courtney reports:

*"I say unhesitatingly that clerical work for women thirty years ago, when I was first venturing into the business world, was a soul-destroying avocation, from which any women, let alone a woman of higher education, might well pray to be delivered. Yet no prospect for his daughter was then so attractive to the middle-class parent, or indeed some parents who should have known better than 'Government Service'. It is so still"* (Courtney, 1926:138-139).

Initially clerical work was also reasonably well paid. Lockwood reports that reliable evidence relating to the remuneration of clerical labour has always been scarce (Lockwood, 1958:41). However, surveys by the Office Management Association in 1909 led Lockwood to estimate that 46% of insurance clerks earned more than £160 (61s6d); 44% of banking clerks; 37% of Civil Service clerks; 28% of local government clerks; 23% of industry and commerce clerks and 10% of railway clerks. Of those earning less than £160, the average salary was £86. In comparison the average manual salary of the time was £75 per year (Lockwood, 1958:42-43). In 1909 six % of female clerks earned between £80 and £140 per year with a few earning £3 to £4 per week as private secretaries in top London offices. Only headmistresses in the new secondary schools earned more than the elite private secretaries (Anderson, 1988:9). Clerical work was also deemed suitable employment for women in an age when paid work outside the home was frowned upon for middle class women. Office work was considered genteel employment giving opportunities for young single girls to live independent, private and moderately comfortable lives (Anderson 1988:9-10).

Mechanisation and increased demand for clerical work began to exceed the supply of middle-class and well-bred ladies (McKenna, 1987:85). Holcombe reports that a conference sponsored by the London Chamber of Commerce in 1898 reports that great masses of clerks were beginning to enter business directly from elementary schools at about the age of fourteen (Holcombe, 1973:148-149). Into the 1880s there were 'discernible movements away from the employment of gentlewomen and movements towards the employment of young women, and indeed girls, who had no qualifications other than an ability to read and write legibly' (McKenna, 1987:90). Likewise Klingender (1935) and Lockwood (1958) report a change in the social origins of clerks as a whole. Although the social origins of clerks remained largely middle class in the early years of the twentieth century 'more and more children from the homes of aspiring working-class

families found their way into this work', 'both male and female' (Klingender, 1935:64). Lockwood correlates the growth of the modern office with the increase in the proportion of clerks whose origin is working class (Lockwood, 1958:107). Klingender concludes that 'the proletarianisation of clerical labour is strikingly confirmed by the fact that the social isolation of the clerks from the working class had definitely broken down' (Klingender, 1935:64). Klingender attributes this in part to the advent of compulsory education for working class children in 1870 as 'the first and most important cause of declining wages' with the abolishment of the 'old age monopoly of the middle classes' and 'a stream of potential clerks... from the new schools' (Klingender, 1935:21).

The growth and mechanisation of office work also 'probably lowered the general standard of education necessary for clerical work' (Coyle, 1929:181). After 1870 elementary education became available to the whole community and this came to be seen as 'sufficient preparation for any-one aspiring to be a clerk' (Holcombe, 1973:144). Although, as Courtney describes it, the work was mostly 'deadly dull', year by year an increasing number of girls from secondary schools began to flow to business training colleges (Courtney, 1926:40) and the growth in clerical labour was made possible by the rationalisation and mechanisation of office work (Holcombe, 1973:142). Shorthand was developed by Isaac Pitman as a commercial tool during the middle decades of the 19th century and was first used in 1853 by Sir Edward Watkin, manager of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railways (Holcombe, 1973:141). Watkin required all his apprentice clerks to use shorthand and by the 1890s there was hardly an office that did not use shorthand clerks (ibid:142-143). The 'typewriter carried forward the revolution which shorthand had begun' and it soon 'became the companion of shorthand the first step in the mechanisation of office work' (ibid:143).

Women were received into office work with considerable misgivings (Crompton and Jones, 1984:21). Cohn reports that 'virtually in every instance that women clerks were introduced into a new setting, there was intensive protest by both manager and workers' (Cohn, 1985:223-224). Anderson reports that the male image of the female clerks was shaped by the so called 'pin-money girls'. He suggests that the male clerks 'struggling on small income found these pin money clerks frivolous and offensive' (Anderson, 1976:57). These were clerks who were single and either living with or financed by their parents and who used their money for personal entertainment. Employers took advantage of this popular image, real or otherwise, to justify paying women less than men as they were not considered to be self-supporting or, if they were, it was assumed that they only supported themselves (Zimmeck, 1986:163). Thus, employers made the distinction between single and family wage, 'not by a quantifiable measure of output but by the social value of producer' with women's social value obviously seen as inferior to men's (Zimmeck, 1986:164). This led Klingender (1935:22) to conclude that the 'rapid entry of women' was a major contributing factor in the fall of wages. This popular image of pin-money girls was however often far from the truth as Courtney recounts as she reflects on her time at the Times Book Club:

*'They used to drift in asking for work at all seasons .... Nearly all of them were willing to come to terms on a week's notice. Some unscrupulous firms made them subject to no notice at all. Any Saturday they might be told not to come back on Monday. And what that might mean to a girl with no home and a weekly bill to pay to a landlady hardly bears thinking about'* (Courtney, 1926:146).

'Even for the better off women clerks thirty shillings a week after several years' service was considered a good rate of pay...Hardly any of the smaller hostels or

boarding houses asked for room and partial board for less than 25s. Nothing to speak of was left over for clothes, less than nothing for recreation. In fact, though it might mean comfortable pocket-money for daughters living at home, it was bare subsistence and no more to a girl on her own' (Courtney, 1926:148).

Women were also severely restricted as to the type of clerical work they undertook and to their areas of employment. They were also widely regarded as little more than 'office wives' or even servants (Anderson, 1988:16). In fact, Anderson reports that the Mersey Dock and Harbour Board classified only its male white collar workers as officers, unskilled working-class males and female office workers were categorised as servants (ibid:16). This did not stop male clerks from believing that the competition from women was one of the 'main causes of their low income and reduced status' (ibid:59). Crompton and Jones suggest that 'female clerks were and remain a scapegoat for men who feel their efforts insufficiently rewarded' (Crompton and Jones, 1984:20). It was also convenient to blame women for the declining fortunes of clerks when this was actually part of more fundamental developments (Anderson, 1988:16). The growth of the service sector and the expansion of the number of clerks was something over which 'individualistic and largely un-unionised clerks had no control' (Anderson, 1988:17). It was also claimed that office work was not 'proper for girls as it rendered them vulnerable in a male world' (Anderson, 1976:56). There were fears that women would incite men into 'improper suggestions' and many early women clerks were locked into single-sex rooms (Crompton and Jones: 1984:21) or physically kept apart from men on a women's floor or room (Zimmeck, 1986:160). A correspondent in the Manchester Guardian predicted a time when 'if their numbers increase they will completely drive men from their proper work and compel them to trespass on women's domain and seek employment in drapers'

(Manchester Guardian, 16th Nov 1886)<sup>8</sup>. Walby concluded that these protests were not merely concerned with rival workers who were undercutting them but were part of an attempt to maintain the division of labour with men monopolising paid work and women confined to within the home (Walby, 1986:150). In reality most early commercial clerks occupied 'low status, under paid positions in commercial offices and warehouses' (Anderson, 1976:58) described by Lowe as 'clerical job ghettos' (Lowe, 1987:22). Courtney reports that although the girl clerks did not express any grievances ('perhaps they were too young to have formulated them') there was a good deal of discontent amongst the women clerks with their conditions and future prospects. 'Their chief grievance was that, generally speaking, they had no prospects' (Courtney, 1926:142). Although there were opportunities for boy clerks to rise within the ranks for women the grades were hard and fast and 'once a typists always a typist' became the Government's motto (ibid:142). 'What had begun as exciting new fields of employment simply offered ways in which women were subjugated into secondary roles with unequal pay' (Bridge, 2003:104).

However, hostility began to temper when it became apparent that women were doomed to occupy 'a distinct group within the clerical labour market' (Anderson, 1976:60) and did not 'for the most part threaten the position or prospects of the well placed male clerk' (ibid:60). The influx of women did not lead to large scale job losses among men and unemployment by substitution rarely occurred (ibid:18). They did not displace men but came to occupy sectors of the clerical workforce that was without tradition of male occupancy (Zimmeck, 1986:169).

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<sup>8</sup> Cited in Zimmeck, 1986:162



Females did not make an impact at the top of the market, but at the bottom where their increasing numbers represented a trend on the part of employers to use cheap labour (Anderson, 1976:60). The specialisation and internal division of labour within the larger offices matched similar developments in the wider economy (ibid:5) and women found themselves undertaking quite different roles than those of male clerks. Lockwood disparagingly described female clerks as

*“a far cry from the blackcoated male careerist of the counting house, whose aspirations and successes helped to confer the substance of prestige on the occupation, to the routine girl clerk or typist of the modern office, whose future status depends less on her own career than that of the man she ultimately marries”* (Lockwood, 1958:125).

The work line was drawn roughly between the ‘intellectual province of men and the mechanical province of women’ (Zimmeck, 1986:158) with the boundaries between the two remaining constant and absolute (Zimmeck, 1986:159). Female workers cost less and often left to get married staying at the bottom of the pay scales and replaced at the bottom (Lockwood, 1958:20). Feminisation of office work coincided and contributed to ‘the continuous and major reclassification of office jobs in ways that have led to the large-scale vertical segregation of men and women’ (Anderson, 1988:18). Walby suggests that this segregation was deliberate on the part of employers as a strategy to overcome men’s resistance to the employment of women and also helped avoid questions on the comparability of wages and terms of employment as men and women did not carry out the same duties (Walby, 1986:154). Walby concludes that ‘the gender composition of the workforce must be seen as the outcome of the articulation of specific patriarchal and capitalist structures...Thus while men won their struggle not to have women in direct

competition with themselves, employers won theirs to employ women for cheap rates of pay. The results should be seen as the negotiated outcome of a struggle between these patriarchal and capitalist structures' (ibid:155).

Women were also employed in distinctly different areas than men. The General Post Office was Britain's first major employer of female clerks in the new occupation of telegraphist (Lowe, 1987:17). In the private sector while women made major inroads into the commercial office, they made little headway in the male preserves of banking, railways and the law (Anderson, 1988:5). Women also found their own 'niche' with the increasing use of the typewriter in the 1880s (Lowe, 1987:18). Remington typewriters were sold in England from as early as 1874 (Holcome, 1973:144). They marked the first stage in the mechanisation of office work that also included 'calculating machines, addressing machines, duplicating machine and machines for sorting, stamping and sealing'. (Coyle, 1929: 182). Before the typewriter it was men who undertook the job of copying by hand (Routh, 1965:25) and initially men did train as typists (Anderson, 1988:17). However, it soon became apparent that typists were not likely to be promoted (Anderson, 1988:17) and the typewriter quickly became 'an instrument particularly suitable for women' (Routh, 1965:25). Courtney reports that 'the grade of female typists (within Government office) was on the whole the most to be pitied' (Courtney, 1926:144). Copying was originally done by hand and boy copyists were paid around £40 per year. With the advent of the typewriter the Government offices began to introduce female typists who were paid 16-20s a week (ibid: 144). By the turn of the century the 'new office jobs of typewriter, shorthand typewriter and shorthand typist had become sex labelled as female' (Lowe, 1987:18). A survey of female clerical worker's wages and conditions carried out in 1905-6 found that among 220 respondents, 209 described themselves as shorthand typists (Anderson, 1988:7). The first women to be employed by the Civil Service were typists when the

Inland Revenue employed two in 1879 to keep copies of indexes at Somerset House (Simonton, 1998:239). Women were gradually taken on throughout the Civil Service in 'other quasi administrative' roles but only in 'women's posts, classes, branches, department and with special terms of service such as unequal pay, the marriage bar and restrictions on mobility'. (Zimmeck, 1986:161).

The marriage bar was part of the system that re-enforced women's inferior position in the workplace and in society. Most companies only employed single women and, rarely, widows, with some providing marriage gratuities (Zimmeck, 1986:162). This also re-enforced women's primary role in society being that of wife and mother by 'removing the possibility of their doing otherwise once they had taken the fatal step to the altar' (ibid:162). It also ensured that women remained at the bottom of the office hierarchy as they were often not in post long enough to rise to the top or earn a pension (ibid:182). No married women were officially employed in the Civil Service until 1946 (Lowe, 1987:18) and in the Post Office until 1963 (Lewis, 1988:40). Courtney wondered of the marriage bar:

*"what is really at the back of that strongly entrenched position. Is it purely economic? Is it, like the higher age for suffrage, a last despairing effort to safeguard masculine supremacy by at least reducing the number of feminine competitors? Is it yet another lingering survival of the patria potestas, the father's rights in his women kind transferred to the husband, the belief that some dictatorial authority over the women must be vested in someone, that her duties in the married state should be defined, and defined for her by men? Or is St Paul at the bottom of it? He was no friend to women. But when I really ponder deeply on this subject I almost despair of human intelligence. It is such a tangle of confused thinking"* Courtney (1926:246).

The response of the male clerks to their worsening economic position and 'female competition' was an, initially rather muted, attempt at organisation. The National Union of Clerks was established in 1890 as 'a kind of industrial union for all clerks' (Lowe, 1987:171). Marsh and Ryan report that 'in founding the Union the sponsors of the Clerks had good reason for optimism. Trade unionism was in the air. There was a general disillusion with the numerous, and general local provident, thrift and burial societies catering for office workers. The societies themselves were feeling the pressure for greater militancy (Marsh and Ryan, 1997:2). Clerks were beginning to realise that their position was rapidly becoming precarious (Ibid:2). As numbers grew, wages were lowered and the competition for posts was 'cut throat' (ibid:3). The 1890s also saw the formation of the first permanent staff associations within the Civil Service (Humphreys, 1958:36). Likewise, government officers had begun to organise into various associations including the Municipal Officer's Association, formed in 1894 with the express purpose of seeking retirement pensions for all vestry officers (Spoor, 1967:11). However, clerical trade unionism initially got off to a very slow start. After initial enthusiasm waned members, of the National Union of Clerks ceased paying their contributions and by 1898 the membership was a mere 68 (Marsh and Ryan, 1997:6). The Civil Service associations were also struggling as the Civil Service Board refused to recognise their claims. In 1891 three clerks involved in the setting up of a permanent committee were victimised through transfer and a reduction in pay leading to the temporary disbanding of the committee (Humphreys, 1958: 38). Also in 1891 the Post Office's Second Division of Clerks in the Post Office Savings Bank left their desks after seven hours, refusing to undertake the usual two to three hours unpaid overtime. All were suspended from duty and were only allowed back after each had written an apology to the Post-master General. Upon their return they were informed that the half-holiday on Saturday would be withdrawn for four weeks and they would receive no pay for the days they had been absent (Humphreys,

1958:44-45). Likewise the government employee's Municipal Officers' Association also failed to find ground with membership never exceeding a few hundred (Spoor, 1967:11). It was not until the Twentieth Century that any real gains were made by any of the clerical unions.

#### **4.4 Twentieth Century**

Twentieth Century clerical work is characterised by increasing feminisation and consequent division of labour, proletarianisation, and declining wages (Klingender, 1935; Lockwood, 1958; Anderson, 1988), throwing the staid world of the clerk into turmoil (Lowe, 1987:47). This expansion in the number of female clerks may have occurred even in normal conditions but the process was accelerated by two World Wars (Anderson, 1988:11). By 1911 women made up twenty-one % of Britain's total number of clerks which increased to around forty-five % in the 1920s and 1930s. By 1951 they were in a clear majority (Anderson, 1988:11). These increases have added significance when one considers that the overall labour force participation of women actually fell between 1911 and 1951 as the inter-war years saw a decline in traditional 'women's' industries such as textiles' (ibid:11)

The division of labour also became more pronounced in the 20th Century as companies expanded their need for an increased number of clerical workers by sub dividing the work and gave women the menial, repetitive tasks formerly undertaken by the male apprentices (Dokin, 1988:50). Klingender points to the amalgamations of banks and insurance companies with a consummate 'continuous process of degrading, ie. the more skilled grades such as cashiers were being gradually reduced to the salary level of routine clerk' (Klingender, 1935:22-23). Although the growth in the number of female clerks was

impressive their experience of work within the office environment was very different to that of men (Anderson, 1988:15). Women were subjected to vertical segregation from the start which was not based on objective differences or proven ability but part of a 'patriarchal system in which all jobs are gendered' (Anderson, 1988:15). Women were clearly recruited into existing low level jobs when men transferred out of them or in new jobs created for them (Anderson, 1988:17). Feminisation of office work also led to a continuous and major reclassification of office jobs leading to vertical segregation within the clerical workforce (Anderson, 1988:18). Anderson (1988:17) provides book-keeping as an example of a high skilled 'masculine' role becoming a low skilled 'feminine' role. In the Victorian office the male book-keepers would record all transactions but, as offices became larger and more complex, managerial functions were taken over by accountants and beneath them grew a large number of increasingly mechanised book-keeping jobs largely filled by women. This division of labour was not an incidental by-product of the rapid expansion and feminisation of clerical labour. Lewis reports that committees actually passed judgement on the role of women within the civil service (Lewis, 1988:38-39). Both the MacDonnell Commission, 1914 and the Gladstone Commission, 1919 stressed that women should be recruited to separate roles as they did not 'have the same talents as men' and were 'not interchangeable'. These 'differences' became embedded in salary scales, for example, the National Whitley Council Report of 1920 listed the lowest clerical grade as female writing assistants (Ibid:39).

The Twentieth Century also saw the further erosion of the status and pay of clerks. Described by Klingender as 'proletarianisation complete' he points to both the increased number of women and the decline in salaries as evidence of this (Klingender, 1935:20). Table 4.2 shows the percentage of clerks in salary groups in 1909-10:

**Table: 4.2 Clerks salaries 1909-1910**

Salary	Commerce and Industry	Banks	Insurance	Railways	Civil Service	Local Government
<b>MALES</b>						
Above £160	23%	44%	46%	10%	37%	28%
Less than £160	5%	10%	7%	5%	8%	11%
Less than £140	6%	8%	6%	7%	11%	11%
Less than £120	11%	8%	8%	13%	11%	15%
Less than £100	15%	8%	7%	20%	10%	12%
Less than £80	16%	7%	7%	24%	9%	9%
Less than £60	10%	7%	10%	12%	9%	6%
Less than £40	14%	8%	11%	9%	5%	8%
<b>FEMALES</b>						
Above £160	0	-	0	-	0	0
Less than £160	0	-	0	-	1%	2%
Less than £140	1%	-	0	-	3%	3%
Less than £120	2%	-	3%	-	4%	3%
Less than £100	3%	-	7%	-	10%	13%
Less than £80	11%	-	46%	-	26%	12%
Less than £60	32%	-	31%	-	29%	22%
Less than £40	51%	-	13%	-	27%	44%

Source: Klingender, 1935:20

Klingender reports that the tax exception limit at that time was £160 and that only one quarter of male clerks in private employment received more than £160 a year; 55% of those in commerce and industry and 65% in railways received less than £100 a year and one-quarter in the former received less than £60 per year. For women however the position is much worse. Klingender fails to comment on the complete absence of women in banks and railways but he does point out that a high proportion are earning less than

£60 a year with very few earning over £100 a year and gives the average salary for female clerks as £45 per year (Klingender, 1935:19-20). The table starkly illustrates how, in spite of salaries being generally low across the sector, in general, the proportion of men on each salary band declines as the salary declines whereas the number of women on each salary band declines as the salary increases. This, along with the absence of women from certain sectors, shows how vertical and horizontal segregation were firmly established within the clerical occupations.

Klingender suggests that the main reason for the poor salaries and declining social status of the clerk was the introduction of compulsory education for working-class children which 'finally abolished the age old monopoly of the middle classes...' and resulted in 'a constant stream of potential clerks being discharged onto the labour market from the new schools' (Klingender, 1935:21). The last decade of the 19th century also saw the growth in commercial education (Holcombe, 1973:145). The Education Act of 1902 saw the beginning of evening continuation schools and technical schools and by 1914 commercial education was accessible to all classes of the community (Holcombe, 1973:146). Klingender further points to the Depression as a turning point in the proletarianisation of clerks as it removed the final barrier of security of employment. He concludes that although there are 'a small minority of clerks in certain offices that are still allowed to occupy a privileged position...their days are counted, their numbers in decline from year to year through the operation of the same factors that have brought about the economic degradation of their fellow clerks' (Klingender, 1935:98).

The internal restructuring of the office which 'gathered pace after 1900 is most graphically illustrated in the feminisation of its workforce' (Lowe, 1987:26) and the overall growth in



clerical labour (Klingender, 1935; Lockwood, 1958; Anderson, 1988). During the early part of the twentieth century 'thousands of young men and women equipped with the essential clerical skill – literacy –were pouring into the market' (Lockwood, 1958:43). Prior to 1911 the number of clerks grew alongside the growth in business for which foreign trade figures could be taken as a rough index (Klingender, 1935:25). However, between 1911 and 1921 there was a decline in foreign trade but still a 50% increase the number of clerks (70% in public services) whereas the total increase in employment of the population was only 5.4% (Klingender, 1935:25). The growth of female clerical workers also continued unabated throughout the early twentieth century (Crompton and Jones, 1984; Lowe, 1987; Routh, 1965; Klingender, 1935) and the rate of increase in male clerks showed a sharp decline (Klingender, 1935:26). Between 1901 and 1951 the percentage of female clerks grew from 13.4% of the profession to 59.6% (Crompton and Jones, 1984:19). In 1951 male clerks were 143% of their 1911 figure whereas female clerks were 787% of the 1911 figures (Routh, 1980:24-5). 'Clerical labour thus became one of the most important fields of employment for women, ranking third after factory work and domestic service' (Klingender, 1935:26).

'By 1914 the basis was laid for the expansion in the number of female clerks' (Anderson, 1988:11). However, the substitution of women for men took place on the largest scale during the First World War (Routh, 1965:25). Courtney offers the opinion that 'women clerks owe a great deal to the War' (Courtney, 1926:151) as not only did they gain employment in large numbers but women became sufficiently established in big business houses to get a share of the better positions and were also admitted as candidates for the higher grades of the Civil Service (Ibid:150-151). Martindale's account of women in the civil service reports that during the war women 'came to be entrusted, though on a temporary basis, with every kind of administrative, executive and clerical work, and with

the supervision and training of staff, the Treasury agreeing to the enrolment of women university graduates as junior administrative assistants, and to the transfer of a few women from departmental to administrative work' (Martindale, 1938:76). By the end of the war women were employed within every department within the Civil Service, 'sitting in the same room as men and even at the same table...segregation of the sexes had been discarded by force of circumstances' (Martindale, 1938:81). The large gains in employment in munitions and engineering that women made during the First World War were quickly lost as industries contracted and powerful male trade unions voiced their objections; clerical work represented one of the few lasting gains (Anderson, 1988:11). For example, in 1914 there were only 1,000 women railway clerks whereas in 1919 there were 12,000 (Lockwood, 1958:92). There were also gains in the Civil Service from 65,000 in 1914 to 170,000 in 1919 although many of these were employed in temporary and lower grades (Martindale, 1938:75-81). However, some women were expelled from their clerical jobs at the end of the war leading to objections from the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries on the basis that for many of them the massive losses of male lives during the war had excluded them from marriage and on the basis that not all of these women were expelled to make way for returning servicemen but 'in order to make way for youngsters from school' or because of 'complaints that the men will not work beside the women in this or that office' (The Woman Clerk, 1919:2)<sup>9</sup>.

One of the first references to clerks in universities can be found in 1914. The scanty evidence available suggests that, at the relatively small number of universities of the time, academic staff were generally responsible for all their administration work, including typing (Gay, 2007:78). However, in 1914 at Imperial College London, Professor Bone reported that he finally had access to a typist after bitterly complaining for some time about the

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<sup>9</sup> Taken from the archives of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries.

amount of letters he had to write himself (ibid:78). In 1919 Constance Sherwood was employed as a shorthand typist at Imperial and became personal secretary to the rector with responsibilities for the halls of residence and 'official hostess at the formal dinners' (ibid:426-427). However, it would not appear that this access to secretarial support was widespread, for some seven years later in 1921 Professor Hugh Callander complained 'I wish I had a secretary. I get so sick of typing and my machine is out of order' (ibid:78). Gay reports that it was not until the mid-1920s that secretaries at Imperial College became the norm and at that time one per department was usual (ibid:78). However, it is very difficult to gauge the actual numbers of secretaries at work in individual universities as most kept no records. An example of this can be seen at Imperial College as early as 1907 when records show just 2 women on the teaching staff and 3 female students (ibid:70). However, a report from the governing body was, at a similar time, dealing with a request for more women's lavatories in all three buildings suggesting a growing number of female researchers and support staff hidden from the records (ibid:70). Even by the 1930s a secretary for each department was not universal. It was not until 1924 that the chemistry department at Imperial had a secretary when Miss Hornsby came to work for Professor Briscoe (ibid:101). Until her arrival it was reported that the laboratory boy typed up the thesis (ibid:101). There is also evidence that college heads at the University of Oxford had secretaries in the 1920s. One history of Oxford reports that the head of Trinity college's secretary 'burst into tears on hearing that his presidency of Trinity was unexpectedly to be prolonged by two years' (Harrison, 1994:84).

Anderson reports that female clerks also suffered less during the Great Depression of the 1920s and 30s (Anderson, 1988:12). This period of rapid decline, which began at the end of 1929 had a profound effect on the position of clerical labour (Klingender, 1935:86). Salary cuts and insecurity marked this period in labour history with Klingender reporting on

new salary scales at the Midland Bank from January 1930 which reduced male clerk's salaries by as much as £60 per year (Klingender, 1935:86). Although women's salaries also declined during the Depression with reductions of around 20 shillings per week in 1931 for juniors with specialised training (Klingender, 1935:88) there is evidence to suggest that they fared better than men for employment during and after this period (Klingender, 1935; Anderson, 1988). Klingender reports that the position of men over forty became 'desperate' as almost all large firms had cut their male staff considerably which meant that many older men would never be re-employed (Klingender, 1935:93-95). However, the demand for typing skills remained buoyant and, women with 'their more generalised skills were better able to engage in successful job-searching' (Anderson, 1988:12). Women were however criticised for taking these typing roles during the Depression even though only 2.5 % of typists in the 1930s were men and such work was stereotyped as women's work and paid as such (Braybon, 1987:139).

Segregation by gender certainly persisted and became re-enforced across the clerical occupations throughout the twentieth century. Martindale (1938: 103-113) clearly illustrates this segregation with the Civil Service. In 1920 the Government adopted four treasury classes as recommended by the Reorganisation Committee, 1919. The administrative class was concerned with the 'formation of policy, with the co-ordination and improvement of Government machinery and with the general administration and control of the departments of public service' (ibid:103). For this class the highest educational qualifications were needed and although competition was supposedly open to both men and women it is clear that few women actually achieved positions within this class of employment. From 1927 – 1935 only eighty-eight women competed for a position of which only eight were successful. The next class was the executive class, also supposedly open to all. However, in the 1928 competition for employment 285 boys and

315 girls entered for the examination and 52 out of the 135 successful candidates were women. After that applications from women were disproportionately lower, 326 female applications by 1930 compared to 440 male. The third class was the clerical class where 'all the simple clerical duties in public department in so far as those were not assigned to writing assistants' were carried out (ibid:109). 2,920 women found employment in this class. The fourth class was the writing assistants and shorthand-typists and recruitment was by 'local competitive examinations of a simple nature' (ibid:111). This class soon became confined to girls as 'a turnover of staff on work of this routine character is advisable, and the retirement of women on marriage is therefore an important fact' (ibid:111).

Stark pay differentials continued to be re-enforced as the century progressed. Lockwood, 1958:45) provides the following information on male and female clerks salaries in 1924:

**Table 4.3 Clerks salaries in 1924**

Industrial Group	Percentage of clerks earning over £150 per year.	
	Males	Females
Local Government	87	47
Industry	78	12
Banking	75	69
Insurance	91	30
Commerce	75	14
Railways	80	17

**Source: Lockwood, 1958:47**

By the end of the 1920s clerk's salaries were still higher than those for skilled manual workers with an average of 80s a week for the skilled manual worker compared to 90s per week for male clerks and 'the same relationship between the earnings of female clerks

and manual workers' (Lockwood, 1958:47). However, a narrowing of the income differentials between manual and non-manual workers began during the Second World War when trade union negotiated bonuses and overtime payments caused manual wages to rise (Lockwood, 1958:49).

The early part of the Twentieth Century was also characterised by the development of the early clerical trade unions. Interest in the Labour Movement had never been higher and between 1901 and 1903 the affiliated membership of the Labour Representation Committee, the forerunner of the Labour Party, increased from 455,000 to 950,000 (Marsh and Ryan, 1997: 7). Trade Unionism became more pertinent to a growing number of clerks (Klingender, 1935:23). Between 1905 and 1906 the National Union of Clerks 'rode the crest of this wave of political sympathy for the unions... and by the end of 1906 the number of branches had risen to seventeen and its total membership to 330' (Marsh and Ryan, 1997:7). In 1905 the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) was formed with a membership of 8,122 at the end of their first year (Klingender, 1935:23). In 1903 the Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists was formed (later the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries), initially in an attempt to maintain standards and salaries with different classes of membership and minimum salary requirements for membership (Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists, 1904)<sup>10</sup>. Other white collar trade unions also began to flourish within the Post Office, the Railways and various Civil Service Departments. Consequently the first fourteen years of the Century were characterised by considerable rivalry between the various bodies representing clerks and with other unions over the unionisation of the clerks they employed (Marsh and Ryan, 1997:17).

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<sup>10</sup> Taken from the archives of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries

The bitterest rivalry was between the National Union of Clerks and the Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists, later to become the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries. This was described by Marsh and Ryan as ‘an uneasy relationship between two organisations which continued until changing circumstances made practicable their amalgamation in 1941 under the title Clerical and Administrative Workers Union’ (Marsh and Ryan, 1997:21). The Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists was formed to ‘check the evils which must necessarily accompany ... the increased demand for, and corresponding increase in the supply of workers’ (Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists, 1904)<sup>11</sup>. The first newsletter of the union bemoaned the hundreds of students who left the various Shorthand and Typewriting Schools without an adequate education to fit them for their work and in no position to claim good salaries. The initial aims of the Association appeared less in keeping with those of a trade union and more of a craft organisation, an eventual ill-fated attempt to control the quality of supply of shorthand typists rather than concern with improving the pay and conditions for all. Minimum salary requirements were laid down as the condition for membership and there were two classes of membership. Class A ‘persons who have at least six months training and not less than six months practical work, or who have served one year’s apprenticeship’ and class B ‘persons who have had three or more years’ experience’ (Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists, 1904). A test was required for admission to Class A, each application for Class B was considered on its merits and it was ‘within the powers of the Committee to refuse admissions for those who do not appear to be qualified for membership’ (Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists, 1904). Its initial aims were eventually doomed to failure by its ‘nervousness of trade union affiliations and practices...its emphasis on training and competence rather than pay and conditions and its selective membership’ (Marsh and Ryan, 1997:21). Although not initially set up just to represent women, the nature of its business soon rendered it an all-female union. By 1911 its

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<sup>11</sup> Taken from the archives of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries

membership was 104, lower than it had been in 1905, compared to the National Union of Clerks 5,000 members (ibid:24). Eventually prominent members concluded that the association must 'either rise to meet the new conditions or dissolve the association' (ibid:24) and in 1911 the association became the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries, extending membership to clerks and secretaries and becoming officially an all-female organisation (ibid:24). From then on membership grew from 350 in 1912 to a peak of 7,500 in 1920 (ibid:252). Although facing on-going challenges from the male NUC the AWCS archives give the clear impression of a valiant little union fighting a difficult battle for equality in an era of complete male dominance within the workplace and female exclusion from the majority of the trade union movement. However, it probably did not help its recruitment by concentrating on maintaining entry requirements rather than campaigning for better pay and conditions for all. In a letter dated January 31st 1911 to Headmistresses of the London Chamber of Commerce Secondary Schools, the Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists described the excess supply of less skilled workers as a 'serious menace to the clerical professions, salaries being continually reduced through the competition of young girls, whose fathers give them board and lodging' (Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists, 1911).<sup>12</sup> However, latterly the organisation also lobbied individual employers regarding the employment of women. In a newsletter of 1915 'the Woman Clerk' it was reported that the AWCS was attempting to secure a reconsideration of the position of Newcastle Council who were considering suspending further engagement of women following a decision by the Council to raise the salaries of female staff.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Taken from the archives of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries

<sup>13</sup> Taken from the archives of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries



The General Secretary of the National Union of Clerks, Herbert Elvin, held as his ultimate goal the exclusion of women, not just from offices but from all paid work, concluding that certain problems would remain 'until that time when female labour will not be known in factory workshop or office' (The Clerk, 1908:131)<sup>8</sup>. However, in apparent contradiction of its leader the NUC did have an official policy of equal treatment of men and women although this would seem to be more for the benefit of its male members 'Gentlemen, in the hope that you will grant to women full equality with you – not for her sake, but for yours, and our sons' and your son's sons' (The Clerk, 1908:9). It would seem to be an opportunity missed as the two major organisers in the private sector, the NUC and the AWCS, failed to work together to protect pay and conditions but instead worked in rivalry. The peevish attitude of the NUC towards the AWCS is graphically illustrated when the AWCS applied to become affiliated to the TUC in 1919. The motion for affiliation was blocked by the NUC with Herbert Elvin opposing their application on the following grounds:

"(1) That it was not a real trade union, and could never be, on account of its low subscriptions of from 1/2d to 2d a week, on account of its lack of strike fund, the sustention fund being formed only of 1/6th of the subscriptions could never be used for this purpose; he said he held letters from the Secretary indicating that the Union was opposed to the strike policy. (2) That the society was a new one and sectional. (3) That Congress had previously decided against the principles of organisation by sex, and that it was against the principles of Congress to affiliate anybody organised on sex lines. The last was his strongest point" (Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries, 1919).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Taken from the archives of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries

The response from the ACWS representative, Christine McGuire, was to:

‘draw attention to the new clauses in our constitution, recognising the industrial form of organisation as that of the future and thus proved that whereas the National Union of Clerks was still confining itself to the craft form of organisation our union was looking ahead and proving itself one of the advanced rather than old-fashioned societies. Your delegate was able to prove that although the Union had not had a strike during the 16 years of its existence it had been able to secure concessions by negotiation such as any of the biggest union might be proud to have obtained at the end of a big strike. With regard to sectionalism, your delegate said that there was not a union present that could be said to be free from this charge, and with regard to sex-organisation, your delegate said Mr Elvin surely did not mean to suggest that the Amalgamated Society of Engineers should be ejected from Congress because it did not open its ranks to women. Your delegate then raised a point which she said she would not have raised had not the NUC raised their blocking motion, and that was the fact that there were well over 45,000 organised clerks outside Congress – more than there were in the NUC and expressed hope that their Congress would not allow the NUC or any other union to keep out these and other professional workers. Your delegate pointed out that this Union had first approached the NUC with a view to amalgamation eight years ago, but this and subsequent attempts on our part had failed, as had many other attempts at amalgamation with the same union’ (Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries, 1919).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Taken from the archives of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries

Following this response Congress refused to listen to any more charges from the NUC and insisted upon a vote being taken which went in favour of the AWCS with only the NUC voting against them.<sup>10</sup> However, neither union had massive successes in recruiting members and on 24th March 1941 the two unions merged into the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union with a combined membership of 20,000 (Marsh and Ryan, 1997:93). Even after amalgamation Lockwood reports in 1958 that the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union had recruited only about 5% of its potential membership of around 1 million clerks in industry and commerce (Lockwood, 1958:145).

Clerical trade unions that organised in specific areas appeared to do better at recruitment than the general clerical unions such as the NUC and AWCS. However discriminatory policies persisted throughout the trade union movement for many years. For example, the Railway Clerks Association (RCA) was formed in 1897 and, for a clerical union, was quite left wing, affiliating to the TUC in 1903, the Labour Party in 1909 and being the first clerical trade union to threaten industrial action. By the end of the First World War the RCA had a membership of 61,000 out of a possible total of 100,000 railways clerks (Lockwood, 1958:156-159). The Railway Clerks were mixed in their 'sex demands' with an anti-feminist rank and file and a leadership favouring equal opportunities for women (Cohn, 1985:152). The leadership of the RCA concluded that feminisation of the workforce was inevitable in the long run and short-term opposition to female employment was only likely to produce 'a body of female workers outside the union who could effectively serve management as scabs' (Cohn, 1985:156). By 1914 the Executive Committee was telling local unionists not to resist the extension of women's employment but to work towards improving the conditions of both sexes. However, this did not go down well amongst the rank and file who favoured an aggressive anti-feminist policy (Cohn, 1985:156). Consequently the RCA had a long history of conflict between its Executive and its

membership. As late as 1946 its annual convention rejected a motion condemning discrimination against married women (Cohn, 1985:157-158).

The National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) experienced the most rapid growth of any clerical trade union, expanding from 5,000 at its inception in 1905 to 230,000 in 1955 (Lockwood, 1958:184) with 90% of all local government clerks belonging to the union by 1951 (ibid:145). Again women were not exactly welcomed into the early movement (early 1900s) when 'most NALGO members treated the idea of women colleagues as no more than a topic for arch or ribald witticism' (Spoor, 1967:465). The 'invasion' of women to replace men as clerks and typists in the First World War led the general secretary of NALGO to protest to the Home Office that 'a general introduction of women clerks on a permanent basis will lower the former status of the service' (Spoor, 1967:465). Although by 1921 close on 16% of NALGO's membership were women the Association showed no interest in the salaries of its women members, which were still, in general, between 60 and 75 % of the rates of men in identical posts. This policy of double pay standards was brought home to NALGO in the economic crisis of 1931 when local authorities began to appoint women to men's posts in order cut spending. However, still NALGO did not budge for another five years until in 1936 after several defeats the motion to campaign for equal pay was adopted by the union. However, the same conference also voted to oppose the employment of married women in local government. (Spoor, 1967:465-467).

Likewise the Civil Service Clerical Association grew to be the largest purely clerical trade union in the world with a record of militant trade unionism and strong links to the wider Labour Movement (Lockwood, 1958:168). However, female workers were initially side-

lined into separate organising units such as the Civil Service Typists Association who by 1911 claimed a 90 % membership from a potential of 601 women (Humphreys, 1958:55). Again, this isolated women, not only in the workplace, but in the trade union movement and resulted in inevitable disparity between the aims of the male unionists and the female unionist who developed a strong feminist line (Humphreys, 1958:55). Re-organisation and assimilation of women into the general civil service grades in 1920 eliminated the necessity for unions based on sex lines, 'if not the need for continued special handling of women's problem's' and women were rapidly recruited into the formerly all male unions (Humphreys, 1957:153). However, the Federation of Women Civil Servants remained until 1932, a merger proving impossible because of the male general unions refusals to hold out for equal pay (Humphreys, 1958:153). Consequently, when Humphreys published his account of the Civil Service Unions in 1958 although the number of separate associations had been amalgamated and thus reduced there was still a separate National Association of Women Civil Servants.

Even the bank clerks for whom there was no organisation at all at the start of World War One, and which up to that time had been the 'clerical aristocracy' began to organise in the face of rising living costs and reducing bonuses (Klingender, 1935:32-33). In 1918 the Bank Officers Guild was formed, not as a militant trade union but a guild, conciliatory in its methods and broad enough to take in the whole profession from managers to junior clerks (Klingender, 1935:83). The management employed various counter attractions as a response including the development of domestic staff associations and substantial increases in bonus payments resulting in a membership of the Bank Officers Guild of over fifty %. During the post war slump the poor employment situation gave way to fear for job security and 'greatly prejudiced the chances of successful action by the union, which had hesitated to adopt militant fighting methods while conditions were still favourable for their

cause' (Klingender, 1935:36). At the same time the employers exploited the bank clerk's desire to be seen as part of the middle class elite by reminding the clerks of their 'secure position (if he behaves himself), that he has a pension and that he has a much better chance of advancement, ability alone being sufficient' (Klingender, 1935:45). Finally, in 1921 grading schemes were introduced within the banks with the promise of advancement based on proficiency and the ability to pass a series of examinations which would confer on clerks the 'official degree of banker' (Klingender, 1935:46). However, Klingender also points out that the true reason for the grading system was to ultimately divide the bank staff into two sections, 'a routine section consisting practically entirely of girls working on machines and a professional section dealing exclusively with matters of general banking and management' (Klingender, 1935:46). The Bank Officers' Guild's compliance with the grading system described by Klingender as 'heartly co-operation of the guild' again shows how employer and union policy worked to promote men's interests at the expense of women, again an opportunity missed for another section of the union movement to unite its membership for the common good (ibid:46).

The inter-war period saw demographic changes as well as changes in occupational structure that affected the experiences of young, unmarried women. Single women entered the workforce at a time when the percentage of never married women was unusually high following the losses of the First World War. The inter-war period also saw a growth in lower level white collar work and a parallel decline in semi-skilled and skilled manual workers. Single women were recruited to jobs in the expanding financial, business and government bureaucracies. As in other industries women's employment in offices was characterised by their flexibility in the face of changing economic conditions of the inter-war years – their numbers could be increased or decreased with equal ease. They also came to dominate the routine jobs creating a secondary labour market within

clerical work. Women filled the low-level, high turnover and temporary jobs unattractive to their male counterparts, such as typists, filing clerks and machine operators.

Dual labour markets developed within the clerical sector with women concentrated in the low paid and unstable secondary market. In addition women suffered as employers searched for economies in the face of rising labour costs (Anderson, 1988:12). Anderson gives the example of the Liverpool-based Union Marine Insurance Company who, by 1921, was facing a rising wage bill caused by payment of contingent grants to top up the salaries of its male employees to cover the post-war cost of living increase. Women were excluded from this payment and the company also made savings by dispensing with thirty-seven female clerks who had been recruited on a temporary basis during the war (ibid:12).

From 1931 – 1951 the number of typists rose from 244,000 to 559,000 (Roath, 1965:25). Although aggregate gains were made by women in office work gender inequality persisted within the workplace (Anderson, 1988:15). For example, by 1951 only 3.5% of shorthand typists were men whereas 54% of the 485,000 book-keepers and estimating and costing clerks were male (Routh, 1965:24-25). Pay differentials were also maintained and reinforced throughout the Century (Routh, 1965:25). Employers, male dominated trade unions and even unmarried female clerks colluded to keep married women out of employment (Anderson, 1988:13).

The mobilisation of the Second World War saw further gains in women's employment and the subsequent increase in service industries created additional demand for routine office work. Marriage bars broke down and part-time employment became widely available

enabling women to maintain their place in the workforce as well as their other roles as wives and mothers. As male dominated industry declined areas such as public administration, finance banking and insurance have become rapidly feminised (Anderson, 1988: 12-15). However, as with comparable areas within industry the feminisation of the clerical workforce has also resulted in poorer pay, deskilling/de-valuing of skills and the creation of what has been described as the 'white collar proletariat'.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter clearly shows how women entering the clerical labour market were disadvantaged by both capitalism and patriarchy. Initially male employers and trade unions sought to exclude women from the workplace entirely, and in the early days of the clerical worker general conditions discouraged the employment of women (Holcombe, 1973:1). However, the late 19th century saw 'a spectacular increase in the demand for clerical labour' (Anderson, 1976:52). The need for an increasing amount of labour necessitated driving down the labour costs and the subsequent exploitation of middle-class Victorian women who required work (March, 1977:20). Patriarchal forces including the male clerks and their trade unions ensured the maintenance of the division of labour with women doomed to occupy a distinct group within the clerical labour market (Anderson, 1976:60). The slight distinction in male and female roles within the clerical workforce would have suited the capitalist employers as it enabled for the justification of lower pay rates for women. The distinction suited the male clerks as they maintained their superior status and pay. Many clerical tasks have not been deskilled as suggested by Braverman (1974) they have merely been feminised. These segregated occupational structures and under-valuation of skills persist today.



Since the 1950s clerical tasks have become further mechanised with the advent of computerisation within the office which facilitated further massive changes within the office (Crompton, 1988:128). Legislation such as the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) have improved the situation of female employees and female participation in the workforce has increased dramatically. The latter part of the Twentieth Century has also seen a massive shift away from manufacturing and, from the 1980s, anti-union legislation has marked the decline in the militancy of many trade unions. These massive social, economic and political changes have heralded further dramatic changes for the world of the 'clerk', now virtually an all-female occupation, and these will be considered in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5: the History of Clerical Work from the 1950s into the Twenty-First Century

### 5.1 Introduction

By the time Lockwood concluded 'The Blackcoated Worker' in 1958, clerical work was clearly a female occupation. He reports that in 1911 only 24% of clerks were female but by 1951 two thirds were female with one in every five working women employed in an office (Lockwood, 1958:123). The table below extracted by Crompton from Census data shows how the clerical labour force became increasingly feminised as it grew throughout the latter Twentieth Century:

**Table 5.1 The gender composition of the clerical labour force, Great Britain, 1951-1981:**

	1951	1961	1971	1981
Clerks, cashers and office machine operators %				
Men	51	46	36	30
Women	49	54	64	70
of which %				
Married	30	43	57	59
Part-time	6	13	-	25
Total Numbers	176,540	231,871	264,098	251,289
Typists, shorthand writers, and secretaries %				
women	97	98	99	98
Total Numbers	56,680	71,959	77,969	79,106

**Source: Crompton (1988:123)**

Apart from the continued feminisation of the occupation, the latter part of the twentieth century also saw other major changes that would all impact on the role and status of the clerical worker. Legislative changes such as the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and the Equal Pay Act (1970) at least stopped the blatant discrimination in employment practices and pay determination that were a feature of the labour market prior to the 1970s. Gone were the days when the head of the Civil Service could openly declare that women were

cheap to employ and less likely to combine for the purpose of extorting higher wages (Martindale, 1938:158) although some may have continued to think it. The typing pool was a feature of the 1950s and this persisted until the early 1980s when the microcomputer revolutionised office work in much the same way as the typewriter had a century before.

The role of clerical and administrative staff in Universities during the 1950s and 1960s remains unclear. Much is written about student, academics and buildings but very little about the role of support staff. Anecdotal evidence is available from the histories of individual universities that suggest that their numbers remained small and that an immediate class hierarchy was apparent between the female clerical workers and the usually male academics. Kolbert reports that at the University of Keele (then the University College of North Staffs) in February 1950 there were thirteen professors and two secretaries, Miss Morton the principal's secretary and Miss Bailey, secretary to the registrar (Kolbert, 2001:41). Both of these secretaries had come from local government offices and it was claimed they did 'a stupendous job' (idb:41). Smith also reports that they 'had important jobs to do' and 'coped well with the academics who tended to suffer from a curious type of snobbery' (Smith, 1998:99-100). Gay reports that in 1968 at Imperial College London non-academic staff were segregated into their own dining room (Gay, 2007:436). However, it would appear that their numbers remained relatively small. Early departments at Keele consisted of a professor, 'the secretary' and a technician (Smith, 1998:119). Evidence suggests that in the 1950s and 1960s much of the administration was still carried out by academics who were responsible for admissions and examinations (Kolbert, 2001:127) and the pastoral care of students was the responsibility of professors wives (Smith, 1998:129). Suggestions of substantive numbers is not seen until the late 1960s following the expansion of higher education as a result of

the Robbins Report (Robbins, 1963) and this is dealt with under the section on trade unionism.

Rather than plotting the chronological development of clerical work from the 1950s onwards this chapter takes a different approach and looks at the changes that impacted on this workforce in terms of different themes. Some of these themes, for example, the debate on technology, took place within a specific timeframe and therefore do not run throughout the time period. The position of women in the general workplace is examined along with particular issues that affected the clerical workforce at the time, such as the impact of new technologies and the impact of trade unionism in both the public and private sector. This section also includes evidence of early disadvantage within the trade union movement for clerical and administrative staff within higher education.

## **5.2 Women in the Labour Market**

Since 1970 there has been a raft of legislation covering discrimination. This began with the Equal Pay Act (1970), passed in response to a strike of 1968 of women workers at Ford Motor Company (Conley, 2011:10). However, of the nine million women who were working in 1975 only about half did the same job as men with 2.5 million employed as typists, office machine operators and sewing machinists, which were virtually women only posts (Davies, 1975:19). Additionally, when men and women did work together women tended to be employed at the lower levels, for example, although women greatly outnumbered men in clerical work, only 10 per cent, compared with 25 per cent of men, were in senior clerk positions (ibid:19). The proliferation of older, married women in clerical work also allowed for more subtle discrimination to take place. Older women clerks (like older male clerks) were unlikely to be promoted because of their perceived lack of

human capital and therefore, much like the earlier generations of women-only grades and marriage bars, they presented little threat to the male clerical career (Crompton, 1988:131).

Following the Equal Pay Act was the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975 and the Race Relations Act, 1976. The last fifteen years have seen a range of legislation covering discrimination by disability, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, religion and age as well as directives on the equal treatment of part-time workers and regulation on the use of fixed term contracts. During the 1980s government policy encouraged deregulation of the labour market (Dex, and McCulloch, 1995:v). However, since 1997 there has been a raft of regulation to protect workers and encourage family friendly employment. These include the Working Time Directive (1998), the Part-time Worker's Directive (1997), the Parental Leave Directive (1999) and Time off for Dependents (1999) (Dex, 2003:7). On March 2000 Tony Blair launched the Government's proposals to promote a better work-life balance which included a campaign aimed to encourage employers to introduce flexible working practices (Houston, 2005:1). Most recently the 2010 Equalities Act combines all previous equalities legislation and covers nine protective characteristics, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act>). However, although a legislative framework for equality is important 'both symbolically and practically' there is a limit to what the law can achieve (Dickens, 2007:486).

There have also been massive demographic and social changes that were to impact on clerical employment, especially for women. During the 1980s, a shift in the political climate led to erosion both of trade union rights and the industries that they traditionally

served. The 1970s and 1980s also saw a substantial improvement in the extent and level of qualifications gained by women after leaving school (Crompton, 1988:129). For example, in 1970 only 10 per cent of business management undergraduates were female; by 1978 this had risen to 27% and by 1983 37%. In Law the growth was from 24 per cent in 1978 to 46% in 1983. (UCCA Annual Report in Crompton, 1986:131). By 2011 women undergraduates outnumbered men by 83,525 (HESA, 2012:Table 7)

Married women entered the workforce at a rapid rate during the 1970s leading to the establishment of a 'two-phase female work profile' (Crompton, 1988:129). A study by Crompton of over 400 female local government, banking and insurance clerks in the 1980s demonstrated this two-phase work profile with the majority of the older respondents having returned to work after rearing a family. These women were much less likely to express an interest in promotion than their younger colleagues with only 29 per cent expressing a desire for promotion compared to 79 per cent of young, unmarried women. Crompton suggests that this lack of interest in promotion may be a result of having to adapt to the lack of career prospects that were available when these older women first went out to work in the 1950s. At this time few women had any notion of a career extending beyond marriage and in the 1950s the major clearing banks required their female employees to leave when married. These older women were also considerably less qualified with 63 per cent of those over 35 possessing no formal qualifications compared to only 10 per cent of the younger respondents (ibid:127-132).

However although the number of women in the workforce was continuing to rise, at the start of the 1970s massive inequalities persisted. In May 1970 there were 110 women apprentices in skilled craft occupations compared to 112,000 men. Of the girls who took up apprenticeships, three-quarters took hairdressing (Davies, 1975:123). Over a third of

female school-leavers went into clerical work and two-thirds of clerical workers were female. A TUC study of the time noted of clerical work:

‘it is a continued source of amazement that an occupation undertaken by so many women – and which makes an essential contribution to the efficiency of every undertaking – is still not generally recognised as requiring an industrial apprenticeship’ (HMSO, 1968 in Davies, 1975:123).

The availability of part-time work continued to grow and from the 1950s to the 1980s almost all of the increase in women’s employment was in part-time work (Crompton, 1997:31). Employment patterns changed yet again in the 1990s with an increase in the number of 25 -34 year old women in employment to 72 per cent in 1994 (Court, 1995:8). As the 1970s and 80’s saw massive increases in the number of married women re-entering the workforce, the 1990s saw an increase in women who never left, returning to work within a few months of giving birth (Court, 1995:9). The 1990s also saw further increases in the number of part-time jobs, from 8.2 million in 1968 to 10.3 million in 1994 (ibid:14). In 1994 78 per cent of part-time jobs were held by women (Crompton, 1997:32). The growth in part-time work has been sustained into the Twenty-First Century. Details of this have been provided in Chapter 1.

“The increased role of women in paid work has been one of the most sustained and significant economic trends of the second half of the twentieth century’ (Connolly and Gregory, 2007:142). However, gendered patterns of employment remain remarkably persistent and these structural differences between men and women’s employment were discussed in Chapter 1. Within these gendered occupational groups there is a persistent

gap in the remuneration depending on gender. For example, within the skilled trades male median earnings are £450 per week compared to £252 for women, and male managers earn a median weekly wage of £765 compared to £547 for women (Office for National Statistics, 2013). Even in female dominated areas male pay is considerably higher with male administrators earning a median wage of £383 for compared to £302 for female administrators, and men working in personal and caring services earning a median of £317 compared to £230 for women (Office for National Statistics, 2013). Part-time workers are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to pay. Recent headlines report a fall in the gender pay gap to a record 9.6 per cent for full-time worker (Office for National Statistics, 2012). However, for part-time workers the gap is more than double this at 19.7 per cent and this obviously has a disproportionate effect on women who form the bulk of the part-time workforce. We have now reached a point where the pay gap between women working part-time and women working full-time is wider than the gap between men and women (Connolly and Gregory, 2011:167). Connolly and Gregory point to deterioration in prospects for women working part-time as they are frequently crowded into poor quality jobs with low pay and little advancement (Connolly and Gregory, 2011:173). Discriminatory outcomes persist in society as the existence of the law itself cannot guarantee equality 'if the mechanisms to challenge discrimination are weak and the structural basis of discrimination is strong' (Conley, 2011:13).

This overview of the development of women's work shows how gendered patterns of employment have been replicated throughout history. Gender segregation and the gender pay gap have remained remarkably resilient even in the face of legislative and structural changes which should have, in theory, had a more levelling effect on equality of opportunity for women. However, more than 40 years after the Equal Pay Act women can still expect to earn less than men. The pay gap is largely unchanging with the mean



earning gap stuck at 15 per cent (Fawcett Society, 2011). Advances in education have not, as human capital theory would suggest, changed this. This is illustrated in a recent report on students who applied to university in 2005/6. Even when women study the same subject, obtain the same UCAS tariff and study at the same university, this gap was still apparent (Purcell et al, 2013:48). This suggests an entrenched gender bias across the economy that can only be explained by gender inequalities within organisational structures and processes.

### **5.3 The class status of the clerical workforce in the later Twentieth Century**

The debate on the class status of the clerical worker continued into the latter part of the Twenty-First Century. In 1958 Lockwood concluded that although 'the twentieth century has witnessed the progressive devaluation of clerical work, it would be a mistake to assume that because the clerk is no longer clearly part of the middle class he is now indistinguishable from the working class. Strictly speaking the clerk belongs neither to the middle class or the working class' (Lockwood 1958:126). Lockwood then goes on to analyse the clerks social position as having 'ambiguity of status' with a 'growing haziness of the middle and working class frontier as a consequence of the increase in skilled manual and routine non-manual occupations' with a consequent 'good deal of overlap between the white-collar proletariat and the 'working-class bourgeoisie' (i.e. skilled manual workers) (ibid:126-132). However Lockwood argues for the 'middle-class' orientation of the clerk in areas such as family size and orientation towards education and claiming that 'there are many indications that the division between manual and non-manual work is still a factor of enduring significance in the determination of class consciousness, despite changes in the relative economic position of the two groups' (ibid:131). Crozier referred to ambivalence within office work where the workers consider themselves to be both

‘exploited workers demanding their rights from a boss or the state and collaborators who have a part in directorial power in relation to labourers’ (Crozier, 1971:33).

Certainly, the economic position of the clerk continued to decline in the latter part of the century. From the mid 1930’s the differentials between manual and non-manual pay steadily declined (Lane, 1989:83). The 1960’s saw one of the biggest erosions of non-manual pay in comparison to that of manual workers. Between 1960 and 1970 average pay across the whole economy doubled (Routh, 1980:164). From 1960 – 1963 non-manual pay forged ahead but by 1964 manual workers caught up and by 1966 they drew ahead with a lead of 2.5 per cent over non-manual workers (ibid:164). By the late 1970s the level of clerical earnings had fallen below that of semi-skilled manual workers, with clerical workers earning an average of £3,701 per annum and semi-skilled manual workers earning an average of £3,827 (ibid:120-121). However, in spite of their relatively small numbers male clerks continued to do better than their female counterparts. For female clerks the average pay was £2,730 in 1978 compared to £3,701 for male clerks (ibid:129). By 1986 clerical workers earned an average of £7,701 per annum compared to £8,330 for manual workers (Lane, 1989:83). Lane reports that this deterioration in clerical pay is cited as an important indicator of the proletarianisation of non-manual work (ibid:82).

By the early 1990s women were still concentrated in a few sectors of the economy with 77% of employees in health and education being female; 60 per cent in textiles and clothing; 56 per cent in banking and business service and 54 per cent in distribution, hotels and catering (Court, 1995:16). In 1993 clerical and secretarial work was the biggest employer of women with 27.4% of all women employed in this sector, compared to 29.9 per cent in 1973 (ibid:19). During the same period the percentage of men employed

in clerical and secretarial occupations fell from 8.7% to 6.7% and women's share of the total clerical employment grew from 66.4 per cent to 77.8 per cent (ibid:19). However, even in a highly feminised occupation such as clerical and secretarial work, women's earnings still trailed behind those of men. The 1994 New Earnings Survey reported that the average hourly earnings of full-time clerical and secretarial staff was £6.00 per hour for women and approximately £6.50 for men. For managers and administrators this difference was more pronounced at £9.00 per hour for women and £13 per hour for men (Bell and Hart, 2002). The 2012 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings classified administration and secretarial staff under a variety of headings and under every one men earned more than women (Office for National Statistics Online, 2012). For example, for secretarial and related occupations the median gross earnings for women was £19,919 compared to £21,953 for men (ibid). At the same time the average earnings for clerical and administrative workers as a whole was £21,164 and for all occupations £29,016 (Office for National Statistics online, 2013:EARN06).

Clerical work however continued to remain an attractive occupation for women, offering a 'safer and more pleasant' working environment than factories (Anderson, 1988:22). Rising demand for and increased routinisation of office work following the Second World War was accompanied by changes in family patterns and control of fertility which offered women more opportunities for longer periods of employment (Crompton and Jones, 1982:139). Women were still relatively better paid in clerical work than manual work when compared to men within similar occupations, for example, in 1978 women clerical workers earned 74% that of men whilst in manual work they only earned 60% of the male average (Routh, 1980: 123). They also earned an average of £2,730 per annum compared to an average of £2,356 for semi-skilled female workers (Routh, 1980:120).

The income for clerks was also less variable and unstable than those of manual workers and usually earned in fewer hours (Lane, 1989:98).

However, although the gap between manual and clerical pay closed from the 1950s onwards, equality of employment in other respects did not, with clerical workers still enjoying better terms and conditions such as pension schemes, sick pay and paid holidays (Lane, 1989:84-85; Hill, 1981:212). Other advantages included higher job satisfaction than manual workers and social rewards such as 'friendship among colleagues in a congenial working environment' (Anderson, 1988:23). However, Anderson offers little evidence of this clerical utopia and the reality of the 1980s office may well be very different. Additionally, he only makes comparisons to manual work and not to other non-manual occupations. However, he does recognise that 'women may have had to scale down their ambitions to match the realities of the workplace' (ibid:23). As the nature of employment changed with growing job insecurity and a decline in career opportunities, as management became differentiated from other levels of employment, an increasing number of managers were drawn from those with higher qualifications rather than routine non manual workers (Hill, 1981:36). There was also an attempt by management to rationalise office work along the lines of manual work with a restructuring of departments by function rather than departments handling multiple functions (Hill, 1981:37). Crompton reports widespread resentment amongst (especially younger) women at their failure to be promoted as compared to men doing the same work (Crompton, 1988:134). Crompton and Jones report that in banking women were not encouraged to take banking examinations (ibid:145) and within the financial sector as a whole only 1% of women made it into management (Lane, 1989:86).

Other studies have highlighted different opportunities and prospects depending on the type of office work carried out. Lane recognised that the promotion prospects for secretaries were reasonably good with a relatively short hierarchy and the possibility of a relatively rapid rise to senior secretary and beyond. Typists and latterly word processor operators however had less prospects of internal promotion (Lane, 1989:86). It was also identified by Downing that 'recruitment and promotion depends upon the possession of certain feminine and class specific qualities such as poise, good dress sense, a pleasant voice and loyalty to one's boss' (Downing, 1998:279). Crompton and Jones report that one of the positive advantages to employing female clerks in socially visible work was, as one Bank Manager put it, 'customers like to see a pretty face' (Crompton and Jones, 1984:139).

The latter Twentieth Century also saw the increased use of the term secretary to denote a specific type of clerical worker which Pringle claimed should be 'looked at in their specificity' rather than 'subsumed under the general heading of women office workers' (Pringle, 1988:ix). During the 1970s and 80's there were a small number of fairly in-depth studies on the role of the secretary (Benet, 1972; Vinnicombe, 1980; Pringle, 1993). The word secretary derives from the Latin *secretum*, and in medieval times the *secretum* was the person who dealt with the correspondence of the king or other high ranking persons (Vinnicombe, 1980:9). In the early part of the century secretaries were referred to as 'office wives' (Pringle, 1993:133). In the late 1940's the term secretary began to be used more loosely to describe what had 'previously been understood in more precise terms as stenographers and typists' (Pringle, 1993:136-137). By the 1950s they were both seen as prim and spinsterish characters or 'dolly-birds' and often characterised in the tabloid press as such (ibid:133). The term secretary became synonymous with women, presented as 'quintessentially feminine' (ibid:3). They were also represented in 'familial or

sexual terms: as wives, mothers, spinster aunts, mistresses and femme fatales and it is these sexual definitions that have made it easy to treat the work as trivial or invisible' (ibid:3). Benet opened her account of the role of the secretary with the assertion that:

'women in offices act out roles that women have always played – those of wives, mothers and mistresses. Their work is supplementary rather than productive; it is low in status and pay'. (ibid:7)

However, Benet also suggests that secretarial work 're-integrated women into the modern world and gave them a look behind the boardroom doors. It has taken them out of the house and has given them the beginning of financial power' (ibid:155). Vinnicombe identified a three tier secretarial hierarchy with the pool typists or secretary at the bottom; the departmental secretary in the middle and personal or private secretary at the top. All have very different roles and status. The senior private secretary was identified as having very little typing duties, perhaps with a junior to delegate these to, and of playing a supportive, administrative role to her boss 'from making the coffee to taking her boss's place at a meeting' (Vinnicombe, 1980:10). Vinnicombe's study looked at a number of private and executive secretaries at different organisations and concluded that the role varied according to the type of organisation and the nature of the managerial position within the organisation (ibid:51). She also distinguished the secretaries who were 'further down the organisation' as depending very much on their bosses to allocate work for them and to direct and monitor their activities whereas the 'top secretaries' directed their bosses activities through the control of diaries and ensuring the completion of the work planned for the day. 'Top private secretaries clearly can operate as very effective partners to their bosses' (ibid:55). Cassell however suggests that such division of labour reflected the

general patriarchal relations apparent within society 'where men held positions of control and women are there to serve their needs' (Cassell, 1991:173).

The 1980s also saw a massive shift from manufacturing to service industries. In 1961 30 per cent of all clerks were employed in manufacturing, by 1981 this had fallen to 19 per cent (Crompton, 1988:126). There was an increase in the number of clerks employed in public administration and defence, from 11 per cent in 1961 to 17 per cent in 1981 and other service industries (including finance) from 26 per cent to 38 per cent over the same period (ibid:126). The 1980s also saw a dramatic increase in part-time work. Traditionally part-time jobs were less prevalent in clerical work than manual work but this changed mainly in banks and building societies. For example, in banking between 1979 and 1985 nearly half of all female employment that was created was part-time, non-career positions with no prospects, such as data processing (Lane, 1989:89). By 1995 the highest proportion of part-time female jobs at twenty-one per cent were in clerical work (Hakim, 1997:68).

The debate on the position of white collar workers in the class structure was re-ignited in the 1980s (Lane, 1989:61). Lane concluded that the majority of clerks were female and from middle-level educational groups with middle-class social attributes. Consequently white-collar workers are not proletariat but lean strongly towards the 'new middle class' (ibid:96). Crompton and Jones describe the emergence of 'middle layers' between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie with the class position of clerks as highly contentious as the use of the title clerk has undergone significant transformation with a long-run tendency to become increasingly reserved for the lowest levels of non-manual employment (Crompton and Jones, 1982:125). Employment conditions and promotion prospects for clerical workers did not change during the 1970s and 1980s (Lane, 1989:97). Unequal

income and promotion chances remained as did discrepancies between male and female workers and from the conditions of manual workers (Lane, 1989:97). Crompton and Jones (1982:139) and Giddens et al (1973:288) suggest that the non-manual labour market had become effectively divided into two with women mainly occupying the lower tier and men in the upper tier with its associated opportunities for promotion and progression. Crompton and Jones also concluded that many of the lower-level managerial jobs display none of the traditional managerial functions such as control of labour power or the material means of production to ascribe a different class position to those of the clerks (Crompton and Jones, 1982:134-135 and 142). In addition, Fearful claims that research on clerical work has been over-influenced by the deskilling and degradation theory whilst ignoring the range of skills found in clerical work (Fearful, 1996:55).

While women have undoubtedly made massive gains in employment within the workplace since the Second World War, especially in clerical work, more controversy centres upon their work experiences in the office (Anderson, 1988:12). The process of segregation has been maintained, if not increased by the growth in part-time work, and gender inequalities persist. As Anderson reported in 1988, 'inside the office, while salesmen, office managers and accountants are located on one side of the gender divide, typist, file-clerks and more recently VDU operators monopolise the other' (ibid:12). The history of clerical work is one of the best examples of how occupational segregation has deflated women's earnings 'without violating any ideological commitment to principles of formal equality' (Crompton, 1988:122). In addition, the growth of modern corporations and bureaucratic government organisations has resulted in hierarchical arrangements of specialised tasks (Lowe:1987:156). These organisational processes and practices



reproduce existing inequalities (Acker, 2006a:110) which are legitimised by the necessity for coordination, efficiency and productivity (ibid:121).

#### **5.4 Technological changes**

The late 1950s and early 1960's saw the introduction of the first commercial computers in the UK and their subsequent expansion has been rapid (Crompton and Jones, 1984:43). Early computer systems were able to break down non-manual processes such as payroll, insurance claims, cheque clearing and client records into a series of routine operations and this began to happen at the same time as a period of rapid growth of local government associated with the growth of the welfare state, health and education (Crompton, 1988:129). The demand for clerical labour was therefore rising at the same time as an increased number of married women began to re-enter the workforce resulting in the depressing repetition of employing women to carry out the routine clerical work (Crompton, 1988:129). Consequently there were few exciting opportunities for women as the process of segmentation was retained with women continuing their monopoly on typing and machine operator jobs (Anderson, 1988:19).

By the mid 1970s the stage was set for major changes in office work as the boom of the 1950s and 1960's was over and few industries were expanding at a time when the amount of information was growing (Huns, 1982:22). Technology moved on at a rapid pace during the 1970s and 1980s and had a profound effect on the clerical occupations which, by the 1970s, employed one quarter of all working women (West, 1982:61). The development of the word processor in the late 1970s probably had the most profound effect on many female clerical workers and the 1980s saw a resurgence of interest in the situation of clerical workers as part of the debate on the expansion of new technology. Although

computers had been around since the 1960's the 1980s saw an explosion of computer technology and a reduction in its cost (Lane, 1989:69). However, even by the late 1980s use of technology was variable across the workforce. Daniels reported that only 23% of public service and 30% of nationalised industries were developing the use of technology compared to 47% of private manufacturing and 37% of private services (Daniels, 1987:43). The rate of technological change was faster in retail banking and insurance than any other sector and particularly well developed in the 'Big Four' (Barclays, NatWest, Midlands and Lloyds) where the pressure to cut costs and offer better services was most pronounced (Lane, 1989:71). Technology led to the greatest division of labour within banking where its capacity to increase control in clerical work by technological change was the most developed and the most pronounced along gender lines. Women may spend the bulk of their activity on data processing and cashiering and see nothing of the more interesting and responsible work (Lane, 1989:80-81). Hill also reported a two tier structure in banking and insurance with senior managers dealing with policy issues and clerical workers preparing data for computers and dealing with customer complaints with the computer assuming most of the functions of checking transactions and controlling work which used to be performed by senior clerks and middle managers (Hill, 1981:38). Harrington reports that by 1990 women in banking made up almost 100 per cent of the part-time clerical labour force with women 'subject to systematic discrimination' (Harrington, 2005:121-122).

The introduction of electronic data processing began a new chapter in the history of the clerk (Crompton, Jones and Reid, 1982:167). The academic debate on the use of technology centred on whether technology would have a positive or adverse effect on the workforce. There were a number of studies on the impact of technology on office work with varying conclusions. Crompton, Jones and Reid argued that technology furthered

the process of fragmentation, standardisation and routinisation. They concluded from their study of the effect of technology of clerical workers that clerks' previous specialist knowledge was eroded, as instead of dealing with a job in its totality computerisation broke down the process into segments. This denied employees the opportunity to see work processes from beginning to end and thus led to dead end jobs with little prospect of promotion (ibid:170). Crompton, Jones and Reid also concluded that computerisation added a new dimension to the feminisation of clerical work which began with the introduction of office machinery. Occupations created by computerisation were segregated on sex lines with data entry clerks predominantly young women carrying out highly repetitive machine operating jobs (ibid:172-173). Computerisation also further marked the separation of trained, qualified and relatively privileged managers, professionals and technical experts from the mass of clerks performing repetitive and highly restricted jobs (ibid:173). Huns concluded that automation was a way of cutting costs and provided examples of a mail order firm in Yorkshire that was able to cut the number of full-time clerical workers from 1,000 to 550 and its part-time staff from 100 to 50 when computerisation was introduced (Huns,1982:25). Taylor et al also reported job losses as a result of new technologies giving the example of Bradford Council who cut their typing staff from 44 to 22 and the National Coal Board who lost seven typists at a regional headquarters following the introduction of word processors. However, Taylor also concluded that many of these jobs were lost by natural wastage due to the high turnover of staff in office jobs rather than redundancy, which allowed businesses to expand without increasing their staff (Taylor et al, 1985:60-61). West predicted job losses and 'the increased polarisation of office staff and further segregation of office work along gender lines' (West, 1982:77).

However, others were not so pessimistic about the introduction of technology on certain sectors of the clerical labour market. Vinnicombe concluded that private secretaries had many diverse duties and a degree of control over their work organisation (Vinnicombe, 1980:65). Therefore technology such as the word processor did very little to change their pattern of work organisation and social relations (Lane, 1989:75). Bevan concluded that word processors actually enhanced the work experience of secretaries, freeing up time for less routine work and enabling them to enhance their status (Bevan, 1984:9). For typists however, the situation is different as before word processing their role was simple, standardised and mundane (Lane, 1989:76). Webster also recognised the different impact on technology (specifically the word processor) not just across the genders but also within the female workforce. Secretaries found that their work changed little with the introduction of the word processor but still contained a variety of tasks with an overview of the whole office labour processes. They were still able to take decisions on how and when to perform tasks based on their knowledge of office routine and practice and use their knowledge to deputise for their bosses; in fact word processors were considered to be of considerable help. For typists however the word processor merely replaced one form of repetitive work with another. Typing had long been fragmented and routinised with a distinct lack of control – the word processor did not change this (Webster, 1986: 120-129). This is backed up by studies by Lane who also concluded that word processing had upgraded secretaries' jobs by removing the more routine text production and leaving more time for administrative or managerial tasks. However, for typists there was little change as the job was already fragmented and routine (Lane, 1989:71-74). New office technology did not lead to a further proletarianisation of the clerical workforce (ibid:82). Lane also concluded that technology did not have a negative effect on male and female promotion as clerical work remained distinguishable from manual work by its 'superior promotion chances but only for men' (ibid:90). Taylor et al (1985:61) also reports that

new technology lead to new jobs in design, programming and maintenance of the new machines. However, as these roles were mainly occupied by men this marked a shift from female areas of work (Taylor et al, 1985:61). Lane (1988:84) also added a positive slant to the technology debate in concluding that there is no indication that technology resulted in the degradation and subsequent cheapening of labour and she gives the example of word processor operators who are paid more than typists (Lane, 1988:84).

The debate on the effects of technology is now largely historical as information technology is now well established across the workplace, and indeed, most of the debate took place in the 1980s. However, its influence on clerical jobs has been substantive and it has also resulted in further re-classification of administrative roles with men being the main beneficiaries. In the UK, 84% of IT professionals are men (BBC, 2012). This has further segregated the non-manual workforce, and is an issue which will be covered within this research.

## **5.5 The clerical trade unions**

As discussed in the earlier history chapter, trade unions were traditionally hostile to women and largely excluded them from the bargaining agenda which initially led to women organising separately (Kirton, 2006:28). In the 1950s the trade unions showed no commitment to acting on issues of importance to women such as nursery provision, equal pay and the rights of married women to equal employment opportunities (ibid:31). However, the increasing number of women in the workplace from the 1950s onwards was to gradually change the attitude of the unions who could not afford to ignore such a large potential membership.

The period from the 1950s to the 1990s saw a rise and fall in the fortunes of the trade union movement as a whole including clerical and white collar trade unions. Trade unionism amongst the clerical occupations continued to grow in the 1950s and 60's. Lockwood reported that by 1951 one out of every four clerks belonged to a trade union with the five largest clerical unions having a combined membership of 450,000 (Lockwood, 1958:138). However, trade union membership remained variable with local government, the civil service and the railways remaining the most unionised areas. Over eighty per cent of local government workers were unionised compared to only thirty-five per cent of bank clerks and a meagre five per cent of industrial and commercial clerks (ibid:138).

As the century progressed trade unionism for white-collar workers remained patchy. Benet reported that eight out of ten white collar workers in the public sector were organised compared to only one out of ten in the private sector. Women are often reported as being hostile to trade unionism, but as Benet suggests 'it might have been smarter for the unions to have tried to recruit women rather than simply vilifying them' (Benet,1972:160) Benet also points to the efforts of certain unions to self-regulate by limiting access to the semi-professional staff that they represent, hence further alienating secretarial staff and she gives the example of the journalist unions forbidding the delegation of journalistic work to secretarial staff instead of countenancing it as a valid method of training. Secretaries were also often discouraged from joining unions with the 'confidential, trusting nature of their work' given as a reason why they should not 'divide their loyalties' (ibid:161-162). Other reasons for lack of interest in organisation include the rise in secretarial salaries in the early 1970s and the discouragement of the lower paid secretaries to join as it would be disadvantageous should they seek promotion (ibid:162). Consequently there was a resultant apathy towards trade unions.

In addition, clerical union members were spread over a large number of trade unions. Lumley reports that in 1973 there were some 280 white-collar workers unions, numerous staff associations and some 500 professional associations (Lumley, 1973:24). However, not all of these 280 unions would be totally white-collar and not all would represent clerical workers, for example, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) was a 'partial white-collar union through its openness in recruiting more clerks, supervisors and technicians' (ibid:67) and the National Association of Government Officers (NALGO) recruited across the public sector as a whole (ibid:66). Other mainly industrial unions such as the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) had branches for clerical and junior administrative staff (ibid: 73-74). Very few trade unions organised clerical staff only. These large number of unions included the Association of Scientific, Technical and Manual Workers (ASTMS), the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff (APEX), the National Union of Banking Employees (NUBE) and the Managerial, Administrative, Technical and Supervisory Association (MATSU) as well as the public sector unions the National Association of Government Officers (NALGO) and the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE); various arms of other trade unions for example SATA, the supervisory, administrative and technical arm of USDAW the shop workers union and TASS the technical and supervisory arm of the Amalgamated Union of Engineers (Hun, 1982:36-38). There were also numerous staff associations at companies such as the BBC and Halifax Building Society although these were not strictly trade unions and were heavily influenced by management (ibid:38).

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the first documented evidence of trade union activity within clerical and administrative staff in universities. As early as 1966 meetings had taken place between the Chief Conciliation Officer of the Ministry of Labour, the unions

and the vice-chancellors with a view to setting up a central council for non-teaching staff (TUC, 1966)<sup>16</sup>. However, progress with this was slow, hampered by the vice-chancellors' refusal to allow clerical and administrative staff to become part of national bargaining (TUC 1966-1970) <sup>1</sup>. At this time academic staff were already subject to national pay bargaining, were well organised in the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and had a national pay spine. Technicians were also covered under a national agreement brokered by the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS). Clerical workers however were subjected to local bargaining as illustrated by correspondence and minutes of the time and were clearly disadvantaged. In 1968 the TUC reported that a high percentage of universities based the pay for clerical staff on local authority rates and 'neither the universities as employers or members of the non-teaching staff had a voice in the decisions reached' (TUC, 1968)<sup>1</sup>. A letter from a spokeswoman at the University of Leicester reported that they had been in pay negotiations for six months and had been awarded £30 per annum. It went on to complain that their pay was analogous with municipal shorthand typists working under supervision and this was:

"not suitable as many private secretaries are working on their own initiative with no administrative supervision and having more specialised and technical duties to perform than pool typist' (TUC, 1969)<sup>1</sup>

The letter also highlighted complaints received about lack of promotion as 'inexperienced male administrative assistants are appointed to the senior positions'; the advertising of vacancies (although the problem with this is not specified) and 'anomalies in our pension scheme which penalise women for being women'. The letter also noted that 'technicians are in a union and therefore their pay and conditions are vastly superior'. The letter concluded with the final complaint that their committee was refused effective recognition

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<sup>16</sup> Taken from TUC records at the University of Warwick



and they were not allowed an official spokesperson (TUC, 1969)<sup>17</sup>. Pay at the University of London in 1971 was 'determined on the basis of comparability with the Civil Service, Local Government and the electrical companies' (TUC, 1970)<sup>2</sup> and a letter from the University of Cambridge Student Assembly concerning unionisation of non-teaching staff claimed that 'the campaign for unionisation was over 50 years old' and the position of non-teaching staff was comparable to a feudal system (TUC, 1970)<sup>2</sup>.

However, the vice-chancellors continued to refuse to consider national pay bargaining for the clerks and secretaries on the basis that this workgroup only competed for jobs in the local labour market and did not consider the universities as their employers on a national scale (TUC, 1968)<sup>3</sup>. The General Council did not accept this as, 'if adopted universally this would rule out the need for any national machinery in many industries and service'. They also disputed that the assertion that conditions of employment were so different from one university to another to make it desirable to have separate agreements (TUC, 1968)<sup>2</sup>. However, the will of the vice chancellors prevailed. In 1970 this led to the establishment of a Universities Central Council for Non-teaching Staff with the 'general purpose of preserving good industrial relations and providing a formal dispute procedure' (TUC, 1970)<sup>2</sup>. There were three committees, technical, clerical and manual. However, for the clerical and manual staff local pay bargaining remained (TUC, 1970)<sup>3</sup>. These arrangements covered 45,000 staff and almost all universities participated (TUC, 1970)<sup>3</sup>. The Committee provided guidelines for disputes and dismissal procedures but its failure to recognise national bargaining for a large proportion of the workers would appear to render it somewhat useless and from the 1970s onwards it would appear that these inequalities in pay bargaining stirred an increasing interest in trade unionism across the workgroup (TUC 1969-1971)<sup>3</sup>. Correspondence in 1969 referred to the 'rather snobbish, hidebound attitude among some of the clerical staff that to belong to a union is rather low' (TUC,

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<sup>17</sup> Taken from TUC records at the University of Warwick

1969)<sup>3</sup>. In 1970 the University of Manchester Clerical and Secretarial Staff Steering Committee reported a membership within NALGO of only 6 and that 'clerks and secretaries are only slowly coming round to joining a union' (TUC,1970)<sup>3</sup>. Likewise, in July 1970 a letter from the Association of Cambridge University Assistants, who claimed a membership of 1800 out of 2800 assistants, reported that technical staff had been paid a 21 per cent rise as a result of a national agreement and this has lead non-technical staff to think about joining a national union'(TUC, 1970)<sup>3</sup>. It was not until the 1974 NALGO conference that the first meeting of the universities group took place and approval was given to the newly negotiated scheme of salaries and service conditions (Spoor, 1982:394). However, the path for the new agreement had not been easy and staff at several universities had taken industrial action in order to persuade their employers to implement it (ibid:394). This continued refusal of university employers to treat clerical staff fairly was still apparent in 1979 when they were offered the worst pay award for white collar staff across the public sector (Spoor, 1982:454). This resulted in a one day strike, a banning of overtime, the provision for lightning strikes and the 'blacking' of student registration (ibid:455).

Aside from the dispute over pay bargaining, early organisation was not without other problems. The newly formed Council for Non-teaching Staff included representation from NALGO, NUPE and ASTM. However, much of its early history appears to be taken up with squabbles over spheres of influence. The lack of coherent national salary structures for clerical and administrative staff led to disputes between ASTM and the other trade unions as to who would organise the more highly paid clerical staff (TUC, 1971)<sup>18</sup>. ASTM as an established trade union across the sector for technical staff had already recruited a small number of 'senior' clerical officers but there was considerable dispute as to who these were (TUC, 1971)<sup>4</sup>. ASTM took the view that clerical grades were 'not appropriate

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<sup>18</sup> Taken from TUC records at the University of Warwick

to their union, only supervisory grades or administrative staff of equivalent status' (TUC, 1971)<sup>4</sup>. In 1971 these were defined as 'administrative staff not on academic-related contracts whose salary exceeded £2,000 per annum which accounted for 91 individuals at 7 universities' (TUC, 1971)<sup>4</sup>. However, there was considerable dispute over those earning between £1,400 and £2,000 which accounted for 138 staff in 16 universities (TUC, 1971)<sup>4</sup>. The lack of clarity of pay across the sector meant that staff in this bracket could be shorthand typists and thus not considered superior enough for ASTM (TUC, 1971)<sup>4</sup>. Although the numbers of these staff were relatively small the disagreement over spheres of influences and the associated demands from ASTM for additional seats on the Council rumbled on for some time (TUC, 1971)<sup>4</sup>.

Similarly confusion arose over whether it was NALGO or NUPE who should be recruiting at individual universities. In 1971 the TUC reported that NALGO should be the sole recruiter at 19 universities, NUPE was the sole recruiter at 8 universities, NUPE and NALGO recruited at 8 universities, NUPE, NALGO and the CAWU recruited at 2, at the London Universities and at Oxford and Cambridge. No formal designations were made 'at universities where there was no organisation at present' (TUC, 1971)<sup>19</sup>. Consequently, unlike other categories of staff, clerical and administrative staff did not have a single body responsible for their organisation which could not have been conducive to solidarity and coordination of action. This was illustrated in 1979 when NALGO declined to support a day of action called by NUPE on 22 January in, amongst other areas, universities (Spoor, 1982:482). This multi-unionism across the workgroup was to remain the case until the formation of UNISON in 1993.

Undoubtedly trade unions were traditionally bastions of male dominance that often worked to exclude women from their ranks. However, in the third quarter of the twentieth century

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<sup>19</sup> Taken from TUC records at the University of Warwick

‘British trade unionism slowly, hesitantly and often reluctantly began to come to terms with some of the requirements and growing expectations of women worker’ (Wrigley, 1999:43). This was in the face of a rising percentage of females in the workforce, and, after 1979 declining membership and an increasingly hostile political climate (ibid:43). The rising number of female workers forced a change of attitude amongst union leaders (ibid:50) and between 1966 and 1979 the number of trade union members grew by 31.1 per cent overall whereas the number of female union members grew by 73 per cent (ibid::44). By 2005 women were a majority of the membership in five out of the ten largest TUC affiliated unions and made up almost 39 per cent of total union membership (Harrington, 2005:118).

One of the major organisers of white collar staff was the National Association of Government Officers (NALGO). NALGO saw a massive growth in its membership following the Second World War. By 1966 it had 360,691 making it the biggest exclusively white-collar union in the world (Spoor, 1967:491). This growth largely reflected the expansion of the services for which NALGO catered. However, whereas this service expanded by twelve per cent between 1952-1965, NALGO membership rose by fifty-four per cent during the same period, all on the back of voluntary branch recruitment and without any national effort or closed shop arrangement (ibid:492). However, the Union remained cautious when it came to trade unionism, and it was not until 1964 that it ‘plunged into the mainstream of the trade union movement’ by affiliating to the TUC after many years of debate (ibid:557-558).

NALGO also showed considerable reluctance in its acceptance and representation of female members. It showed resistance both to women being elected as officers, and in its reluctance to actively pursue its policy of equality of opportunity and pay for men and women which was restricted to the passing of ‘pious resolutions at respective

conferences' (ibid:468). It was not until 1952 that the government committed to equal pay for government employees and only by way of a promissory note (ibid:471) and not until 1955 that they began to introduce it with increases spread over seven years (ibid:492). However, as women were clustered in certain occupations, by 1963 in the General Division most women were still paid between £15 and £25 less than men (ibid:473) and this 'equal pay' commitment did not even apply to typists, machine operators and similar employees (ibid:566). These differentials persisted throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In 1978 the average gross earning for male local authority administrative, professional, technical and clerical staff was £92 per week. For women it was £60.3 per week. By 1993 it was £372.40 per week for men and £263.20 for women (Ironside and Seifert, 2000:71).

Between 1965 and 1978 NALGO changed considerably to occupy a place in the mainstream of the TUC and labour-movement politics (Ironside and Seifert, 2000:43). Its membership also increased at a rapid rate from 360,691 members in 1966 (ibid:41) to 753,226 in 1978 (ibid:115). By 1978 it was the fourth largest TUC affiliated trade union and also, (after its poor start in this area) it employed more women organisers than any other union and four members in ten were women (ibid:48). However, the election of the Conservative Government on 3rd May 1979 heralded a 'profound and lasting change to the fortunes of NALGO and its members' (ibid:85). By 1992 the combination of 'political defeat, economic neglect, and employment re-structuring sealed the argument for a merger, as a defensive measure against further attacks on the members, their jobs, and their unions' (ibid:350). Thus UNISON was created by an amalgamation of COHSE, NALGO and NUPE into a union of 1.3 million members with the promotion of equal opportunities and fair representation central to the union's organisation (McBride, 2000:16). One of the founding principles of UNISON was to promote structures that

recognised that 'over two-thirds of its members were women, that its members work in a very wide range of occupations and that a high proportion of its membership share aspects of exclusion and oppression in wider society' (McBride, 2000:100). UNISON attempted to ensure that women were represented with a combination of self-organisation which 'enables women as a social group to determine their own priorities' the appointment of women's officer to promote women's issues and chair women's committees and the use of reserved seats for elected positions within the union (ibid:105). Currently UNISON represents 50,000 support staff across the higher education sector (UNISON, 2013)

The Associated of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff (APEX) was until 1972 the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union (Marsh and Ryan, 1997:iii) and was originally the only trade union that solely organised clerks. Contrary to Benet's (1972) pessimistic opinion on clerical worker's lack of interest in trade unionism, membership of APEX grew steadily in this trade union during the latter part of the Twentieth Century from 33,150 in 1950 to a peak of 152,543 in 1978 (Marsh and Ryan, 1997: 250-251). Marsh and Ryan report of the 1970s that 'white collar unionism seemed at long last to arrive' (Marsha and Ryan, 1997:172). Likewise in the Trade Union Congress non manual affiliated membership was close to forty per cent of membership and represented by eight members on its General Council (ibid:172). After the election of the Labour Government in 1974 a number of APEX officians were appointed to Chancellor of the Exchequer (Denis Healey), Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection (Shirley Williams) and Transport (Fred Mulley (ibid:191).

During the early 1970s APEX were able to take advantage of its improved membership to press a number of important issues. The implications of the Equal Pay Act, 1970 were a priority of the union which provided one-day and week-end schools on the Act and the

problems involved including the propensity of companies to attempt to evade the Act by appearing to dispense with separate male and female pay scales but which merely placed women at the bottom or introduced additional elements into male jobs that made comparisons more difficult (ibid:194). During 1973 APEX had disputes with over thirty companies on the issue of equal pay and were successful in all of them (ibid:195). The Union was also responsible for the production of a guide on Equal Pay entitled 'Job Evaluation' which offered a simple guide to modern job evaluation schemes and how they could be implemented (ibid:196). APEX also had some success in its campaigns for improved pension provision, intensifying training on pensions for lay officials and 'identifying the shortcomings of existing pension arrangements and de-mystifying some of the jargon with which pension experts obscured their subject' (ibid:201).

Marsh and Ryan report that the growing possibilities of recruiting non-manual workers in the private sector resulted in intense rivalry between the non-manual unions especially by 'an aggressive ASTMS' and 'matched in the CAWU' (ibid:172-173). The ASTMS claimed a doubling of membership during the early 1970s and the Association of Clerical, Technical and Supervisory Staffs increased their membership by 32 per cent (ibid:175). There have been various explanations for these quite dramatic increases including the high rate of inflation which was resulting in rapidly rising process and encouraging workers to join trade unions 'to defend their living standards and hedge their bets against the future' (ibid:175). Fears of the outcome of automation were also suggested as a reason for the rapid increased in membership (ibid:176). In the latter 1970s with persistent low growth in the British economy and much higher employment rates than the 1950s the 'view of the unions on the employment effects on the rapid development of micro-technology in industry became increasingly alarmist' (ibid:177).

However, after a long period of expansion and 'widespread optimism of further growth, the Union fell on difficult times' (ibid::226). The job losses that decimated membership of APEX and other white collar unions from the late 1970s were more a result of industrial shrinkage and Thatcherite policies than of new technology itself. This period heralded the end of the spurt in membership growth and membership of APEX, for example, fell from its peak of 152,543 in 1978 to a mere 76,691 in 1987 (ibid:251). Membership falls in the early 1980s were particularly dramatic and in 1981-82 alone APEX lost 18,000 members (ibid:227). Unemployment resulting from closures and redundancies arising from Conservative economic policy was widely seen as the main cause of this dramatic turn in the Union's fortunes but Marsh and Ryan conclude that the 'general problem of membership was, however, the same as that which had haunted the Union from its earliest days. Clerks were and remained, even as they branched into administrative workers and computer staff, a disparate group, difficult to service and with few common interests' (ibid:229).

The recession of the early 1980s 'triggered a spate of mergers between trade unions unparalleled in British experience' (ibid:235). During Margaret Thatcher's time as Prime Minister there were 141 amalgamations or transfers of engagement involving 4 million trade unionists and APEX was no exception (ibid:235). The 1980s also marked the beginning of the trend to larger trade unions with a number of mergers and the gradual disappearance of the smaller unions. At the end of the Second World War there were nearly 800 unions, by 2005 there were 226 (Fernie, 2005:2). In March 1989 the amalgamation of APEX with the GMB was formally registered and, although it maintained the APEX acronym as APEX partnership, this brought to an end ninety-nine years of independent existence (ibid:238). By 1992 the 'Apex partnership' disappeared altogether as the GMB re-organised in the light of the potential threat to membership by the merging



of NALGO, NUPE and COSHE into UNISON, the largest trade union in the United Kingdom (ibid:240).

The last two decades of the twentieth century were a 'period of relentless, sustained corrosion of British unionisation' (Ferne, 2005:2). At its peak in 1979 union membership in the UK stood at 13.2 million members (Ferne, 2005:1). By 2010 this had halved to 6.6 million members. Also by 2010 overall union density in the UK was higher for female employees than males (Department for Business Innovation and Skills:2011). Overall 23.8 per cent of men and 29.4 per cent of women in 2010 were members of a trade union. However, for those in the administrative and secretarial occupations 24.5% of men were union members compared to 20 per cent of women (Department for Business Innovation and Skills:2011).

This section has demonstrated the persistent problems encountered in organising clerical workers, as initially identified and discussed in Chapter 4. Trade union organisation across this sector of workers has long been plagued with multi-unionism with its associated rivalries and competing interests. This was the same for clerical and administrative staff within higher education when they first began to unionise. The consequence of this weak organisation clearly works to the disadvantage of the workforce and re-enforces the invisibility in the bargaining process.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Since the 1950s there have been massive cultural, legislative and technological changes within society. The last 60 years have also seen a marked rise and fall in the fortunes of the trade union movement. However, apart from increases in the number of women in the occupation, which has been reflected across the whole economy during this period, the

clerical workforce has remained largely structurally unchanged. It is still a highly feminised occupation with a history of poor unionisation and strong evidence of pay inequities when compared to the relatively few men in the occupation.

For clerical and administrative staff within higher education the most striking feature continued to be their invisibility. Volumes have been written on the history of individual universities but there is always little or no mention of who carried out the secretarial work. Later work on clerical staff has focused on specific themes such as the effects of technology in a specific period (Crompton, Jones and Reid, 1982; Huns, 1982) or on small studies on specific groups such as secretaries (Benet, 1972, Pringle, 1983). None of these mention the role of clerical staff in universities. Additionally, the lack of statistics makes it very difficult to plot the growth of the occupation and hence there is the need to read between the lines of what little information is available.

The best indication of the issues of this group is gleaned from TUC records from the late 1960s and early 1970s. These clearly show the early disadvantage that these workers encountered when it came to collective bargaining and unionisation. The refusal of university management to allow them to become part of a collective bargaining arrangement is a clear example of the patriarchal attitude to groups of female workers. They were the last public sector workers to become part of national pay bargaining (Newman, 1982:344) and this must have surely ensured they remained disadvantaged in the bargaining arena for years to come. When a national pay spine was established for clerical and administrative staff they were not assimilated onto the existing technicians spine but onto one of their own which limited their earnings when compared to other categories of staff (see figure 1.2). Women were clustered in the low and middle salary brackets which were then replicated into the national pay spine that came into existence in

2006. Collective strength was weakened by the number of unions organising clerical staff across the sector and also by the relatively small numbers of higher education support staff within these unions. For example, in 1966 NALGO reported a total membership of 360,691 (Spoor, 1967:491). Only 9,304 of these (2.5%) worked in higher education and these included other categories of support staff such as manual workers, catering staff and cleaners. They were, and remain, a minority within public sector trade unionism.

The issues raised in this Chapter have impacted on clerical and administrative staff within higher education, many of whom have lived and worked through these changes. The next three Chapters will include an explanation of these themes and examine how they have affected the workforce.

## **Chapter 6: Occupational Segregation and Skill**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter will consider occupational segregation across the higher education sector and how this impacts on assessment of job skills with specific reference to administrative and clerical staff. As previously discussed, the higher education workforce was and remains a highly segregated one. Chapter 1 provided clear examples of how women are subjected to vertical and horizontal segregation across the sector as members of academic staff, and horizontal segregation into certain subject areas as students. Likewise, there are certain jobs within a university that non-academic women are more likely to do and this occupational segregation has been identified as a major contributor to women's poorer labour market position and the persistence of the gender pay gap (Connolly and Gregory, 2007:159). This chapter will use background data and questionnaire and interview evidence to illustrate how women within higher education remain segregated into certain occupations and even become segregated within these occupations to their detriment in terms of both career expectations and monetary reward. It will also consider the influence of gender on the analysis and valuation of skill. It will be argued that this segregation of the workforce results in an enduring and systematic failure to obtain recognition of skills deemed to be female.

### **6.2 Occupational segregation within the higher education system.**

Clerical and administrative work is clearly a highly gendered occupation. Across the British economy as a whole 76.5 per cent of those employed in administrative and administrative roles are female (Labour Force Survey, 2012). Given the female concentration of the workforce is 46 per cent, administration and clerical work can be

clearly defined as a female profession (Browne, 2006:10). In this survey 86.3 per cent of respondents were female and 13.7 per cent were male which is broadly reflective of the national picture presented by HESA (2010: Table C) which reported that across the whole UK higher education sector for 2009/2010 there were 73,630 clerical staff of which 59,960 (81.4 per cent) were female. However, when broken down further into occupations groups, nationally 92 per cent of those classed as 'secretaries, typists, receptionists and telephonists' are female compared to 78 per cent of those classed as 'library assistants, clerks and general administrative assistants' (HESA, 2010:Table 1) showing clear occupational segregation within the group.

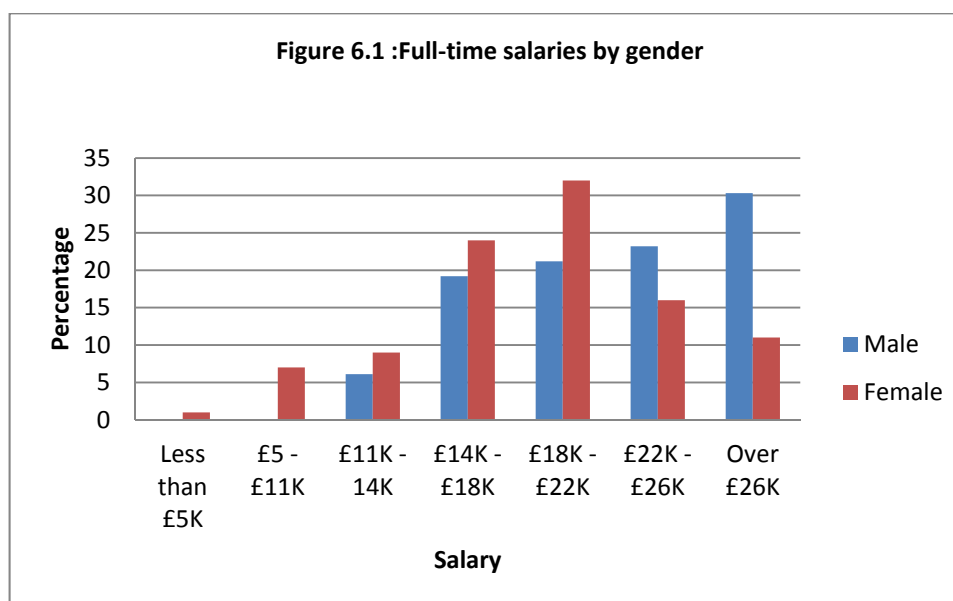
There have been many attempts to explain how capitalist labour markets became and remain so highly segregated (Barron and Norris, 1976; Edwards, Gordon and Reich, 1973). These theories are discussed in some depth in Chapter Two along with Walby's theory on segregation within clerical work (Walby, 1986: 144-155). The historical development of the clerical labour market and how it came to be segregated by gender is also discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 and it is not the aim of this chapter to re-rehearse these theories. However, within higher education Wilkins identified the continued articulation of gender and class as two factors which exert significant influences on the perception of administrative roles within universities with class structures and academic elitism reinforcing occupational segregation and erecting barriers to promotion opportunities between staff categories (Wilkins, 1998:79).

Strong evidence of vertical and horizontal segregation was found within the workgroup within this study. The questionnaire asked respondents to give their job title and to provide details of the components of the job. There were 336 different responses to the question 'what is your job title', illustrating the wide variation of roles and job titles within

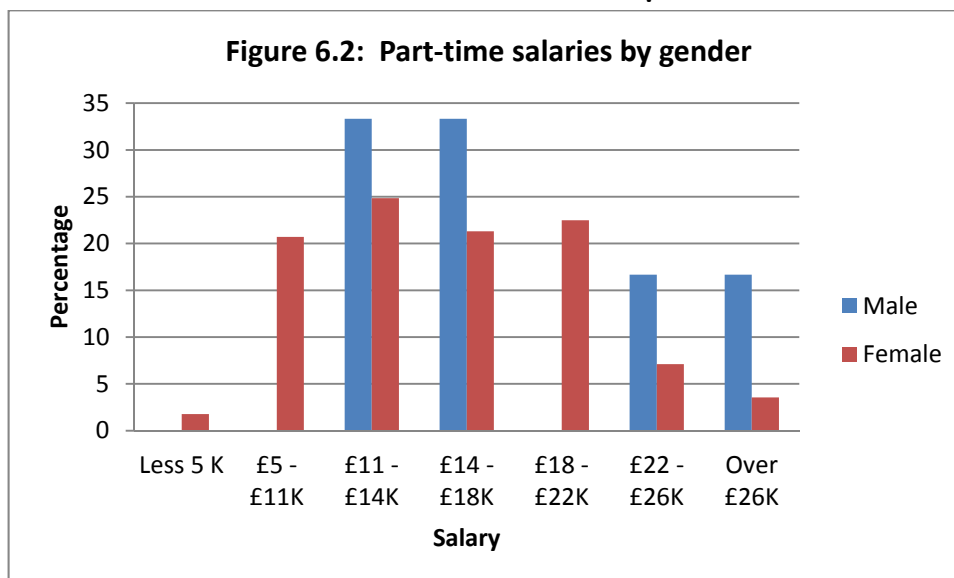
this sector of staff. Only 57 respondents mentioned the word 'secretary' in their job title and 26 the word 'clerical' indicating that the traditional title of 'secretary' is used far less frequently than it was across the sector. It is also notable that only one man described himself as a secretary and one as a personal assistant (PA). Men were more likely to list their job title as assistant or officer rather than secretary or clerical worker, for example, 'assistant to the director'; 'finance assistant'; 'IT Officer'. Those who described their role using the term secretary were also more likely to work in pre-1992 institutions. 16 per cent of those in pre-1992 institutions compared to only 4 per cent of those in post 1992 institutions used secretary in their job title. Across both pre- and post -1992 Universities the most popular job title was administrator with 23 per cent of those in the pre-1992 institutions and 26 per cent in the post 1992 institutions using administrator in their job titles. A full list of job titles can be found in Appendix G. This was also identified in the study by Wilkins who concluded that men frequently had job titles such as information assistant or administrative officer, rarely secretary (Wilkins, 1998:83). 'Such gender distinctions in job titles and functions have a continuing impact and negative perceptions of female roles persist' (ibid:83).

Men within this survey were also more likely than women to work in central roles within the universities rather than in individual schools or departments. 42 per cent of the overall sample (both male and female) worked in central services and 36.6 per cent worked in an academic school or department. However, only 30 per cent of men compared to 38 per cent of women worked in an academic department. This grouping of men and women into different roles can have a significant effect on women's earning potential. The results of this survey showed that 35 per cent of those who worked in central services were in the top two salary brackets (ie over £22,000) compared to only 26 per cent of those working in academic schools or departments. Although other factors will play a part, gender

segregation has been identified as one of the major contributors to the gender pay gap (Olsen and Walby, 2004:20). Where women are concentrated in certain occupations because of restricted opportunities or when this concentration depresses earnings, this is unequal treatment (Connolly and Gregory, 2007:159). Much of the extent of this vertical discrimination can be measured through the gender earnings gap (Connolly and Gregory, 2007:159) and the graph below clearly illustrates how the relatively small number of men in the sample had considerable advantage over the women when it came to salaries:



Of these full-time workers 56 per cent of male respondents earned over £22,001 compared to only 36 per cent of women and only 15 per cent of women earned over £26,000 compared to 31 per cent of men. Even though there are only six part-time male workers gender salary disparities are still apparent with women clustered at the bottom and men at the top of the salary scales.



Chapter 8 will examine salaries and rewards in considerably more depth. The information above is given at this point merely to illustrate how the concentration of women into certain areas of work may affect their salaries.

The women respondents expressed feelings of being ghettoised into certain occupations, stereotyped as 'just a secretary' and unable to make the transition to higher grade jobs. Interviewee 13 described how she felt she had become typecast over the years and, no matter how much extra she took on or how good a job she did, there was now no chance of her moving from her school into another higher grade role. Many respondents also reported on the lack of opportunity to move to managerial and specialist roles, in spite of their high level qualifications and years of experience. Interviewee 11 reported that in her institution almost without fail external candidates were appointed to the higher level roles making it impossible for any-one who is seen as a secretary to gain promotion beyond a grade six. Although there were exceptions, such as interviewee 24 who had risen, without a degree, from a grade one to a grade eight during her 10 years' service within one institution, this was rare. Occupational segregation was extremely persistent across the



sector with what one respondent described as a 'concrete ceiling' for administrative and clerical staff which ensured they remained firmly in their place.

However, although occupational segregation was, in the main, entrenched for the female respondents within the survey there was some evidence to suggest that the male respondents had a more fluid career path. Although small in number a greater number were promoted early and it also appeared that it was easier for male clerical staff to change direction into other more lucrative roles. Interviewee 2, a School Manager, recalls how out of all the staff who had worked for her over the years it was the only male member who had left fairly quickly to work in supporting e-learning across the university in spite of being initially employed as a departmental clerical officer, a traditionally female role. Interviewee 25, a male joined his university from the private sector to improve his career and was quickly promoted to deputy school manager in spite of being the newest member of an all-female team.

As there seemed to be no notable differences between the career ambitions of the male and female respondents it can be concluded that both this occupational group as a whole and also roles within the group are highly gendered, and there is considerable evidence that highly gendered jobs disadvantage women (Bradley, 1999; Walby, 1986; Pollert, 1981; Barrett, 1980). One of the ways is through the definition of skill and the value placed on different skills and this will be explored in the next section

### **6.3 Job content and evaluation of skill**

Underpinning the concept of skill is an ideology of gender that labels certain attributes as male and others as female, not just in the workplace but throughout society and there is evidence to support the view that men and women's jobs involve difference types of skills

and attributes (Horrell, Rubery and Burchell: 1994:220; Philips and Taylor, 1980:79). Administrative staff provide a good example of workers whose abilities to work as flexible specialists are interpreted as something unexceptional as it 'often bears a resemblance to domestic labour' (Jenson, 1989:151) with a consequent undervaluation of the range of skills that many clerical workers possess.

When analysing the components of the respondents' jobs it was apparent that these roles are extremely varied. Only 18.7 per cent selected personal administrative work as a component of their job. This shows a clear erosion of the traditional role of secretaries across the sector who were usually attached to one or more senior academics and provided a personal administrative service. 55 per cent of respondents cited dealing with students as a major component of their job. Other components were split fairly evenly across the sample with 40 per cent selecting 'other' as the major component. The other duties listed were varied and are listed in full in Appendix H.

When comparing the roles of men and women there were some differences. For example, only 46.5 per cent of the men stated 'dealing with students' as a component of their job compared to 55.9 per cent of women. Likewise only 9.1 per cent of men compared to 20.5 per cent of women selected 'personal administrative work'. Conversely 29.3 per cent of men compared to 19.2 per cent of women selected 'staff supervision' as the major component of their role and slightly more (25.3 per cent) of men selected 'finance' than women (22.1 per cent). Men were also more likely to cite 'other' as a major component (50.5 per cent compared to 38.9 per cent of women). 51 different values were recorded for other type of work carried out by male respondents. These are listed in Appendix I. The most cited was IT and technical support with seven responses. This suggests that the clerical workforce within higher education shows traditional patterns of

segregation with women more likely to undertake the personal administrative work and the 'soft' people-centred jobs and men more likely to manage finances and staff. It is these subtle differences that help justify the lower grades and hence pay given to female staff and help maintain the gender pay gap.

It has been suggested that the most striking differences between the content and skill of jobs does not depend on whether they are men's or women's jobs but whether they are full or part-time jobs (Horrell, Rubery and Burchell, 1994:219; Connolly and Gregory, 2007:152). The initial analysis of salary levels for male and female workers in this survey does not entirely bear this out. However, there were also differences between the full and part time workers when it came to the type of tasks undertaken. 63.5 per cent of part-time workers cited 'dealing with students' as part of their job whereas only 9.3 per cent cited 'staff management' and 21 per cent cited 'finance'. Amongst the other duties listed by part-time staff there was a good number who listed routine library duties, such as shelving books, along with photocopying, reception duties, postal duties and arranging catering suggesting further segregation of part-time employees into the most routine and lower grade jobs.

Many respondents commented on the undervaluation of their skills. 46 per cent of those who believed clerical work to be underpaid thought it was because female skills, such as administrative skills, were undervalued by employers and 38 per cent of the whole sample did not think their skills were adequately recognised by their employers' promotion criteria. Many comments were made about the complexity and variety of the role and how little respondents felt it was valued. One questionnaire respondent reported 'It is often overlooked that clerical/admin staff are on the front line and apply judgements regarding some quite high level filtering so that problems can be dealt with

effectively' (Respondent 225). There were also a number of comments on the perception of clerical skills and how they are undervalued by academics and senior management within the universities. 'Clerical/admin qualifications are not valued in academic institutions' (Respondent 301); 'Generally undervalued' (Respondent 606); 'Clerical work is seen as something any-one can do'(Respondent 420); 'Clerical work is seen as being for 'thick' people' (Respondent 179); 'Clerical work is seen as menial' (Respondent 152). It was clear that a number of respondents thought that the level, volume and difficulty of their work was under-estimated and clerical staff were seen as 'second-class citizens' (Respondent 123); or 'un-important background workers' (Respondent 481); 'Although it is seen as a low grade job it can actually be quite skilled and require in-depth knowledge'(Respondent 11); 'The high level of skill is not realised/appreciated as clerical work is very varied from role to role' (Respondent 525); 'Experience and level of knowledge and experience is not always reflected in admin salaries' (Respondent 701); 'The experience of clerical staff is not valued and they are seen as easy to replace. Their loyalty is exploited – like that of teachers and nurses' (Respondent 653); 'Increasing variety and complexity of tasks go unacknowledged as do organisational skills and initiative' (Respondent 70); 'The level, volume and difficulty is under-represented. Those doing it also. It's a very undervalued role' (Respondent 55); 'Management fail to understand the work clerical staff do and how it supports teams and systems'(Respondent 300)' 'Undervalued as the skills required aren't appreciated by those above' (Respondent 381); 'Customer relations skills are taken for granted' (Respondent 451); 'Undervalued compared to academic work and seen as unskilled which is a misconception'(Interviewee 718).

One interviewee reported:

‘I think that in the education sector academic staff are seen as the more important people. It seems forgotten that admin staff are here all year round and without us the courses would not run’. (Interviewee 15).

The assessment of skill also has to be examined from an historical perspective as the skill requirements of jobs clearly change over time. Research on clerical work has been over-influenced by the deskilling and degradation theory whilst ignoring the range of skills found in clerical work (Fearful, 1996:55). Braverman’s account of the de-skilling of clerical work concluded that scientific management sought to break down the labour process which resulted in a shift from the all-round clerical worker to the sub-divided worker with the subsequent removal of discretion in work (Braverman, 1974). However, the sub-divided clerical tasks described by Braverman as a result of this de-skilling bear no resemblance to the range and complexity of many of the tasks carried out by the subjects of this research and the de-skilling debate must be placed in an historical context. The requirements of clerical and administrative staff within higher education have certainly changed over time.

Interviewee 5 had been employed in the sector for thirty-six years and was able to talk about how the skills requirements of the post had changed over the years. At one time she worked in the payroll office in the late 1970s and prior to widespread computerisation was employed almost solely to keep employee details up to date on a card index system. This role was tedious but not difficult and required little exercise of judgement and discretion. Indeed many roles in central services involved one specific aspect of a longer

process, as identified in Braverman's de-skilling theory but this has changed and the general consensus was that clerical and administrative staff within modern universities carried out highly skilled and diverse roles on a day to day basis.

The varying roles and degree of autonomy held by the subjects is very different from an earlier study on clerical and administrative by Crompton and Jones (1984) which concluded:

“that 91 per cent of those on clerical grades could not be said to exercise any control – and therefore we would argue, very little skill, in respect of their own work. These jobs require.....only the capacity to read and write and the ability to follow instructions; workers with these capabilities may easily be trained for these posts”.  
(Crompton and Jones, 1984:61)

The qualifications, level of discretion and responsibility that many respondents in this survey held are more akin to the multi-talented 'black coated' workers of the early Twentieth Century than the typing pools and filing clerks of the latter half of the Century. There is clear evidence of up-skilling within higher education support roles, especially for clerical and administrative staff. The traditional administrative skills that long serving interviewees had spoken about had begun to change dramatically from the mid-1990s onwards. Up until the 1990s university departmental structure was often clearly organised around academics with administrative staff usually taking on roles as secretaries to specific professors or other senior academics. The secretary worked very specifically for that one (usually male) professor and her status in the organisation was very dependent on the status of the academic for whom she worked. This has changed with changing structures, increasingly complex and bureaucratic procedures and the development of

information technology. Secretaries are now far more likely to work as part of a team than they are to work for a particular manager in isolation from one another. They no longer play a direct supporting role to academics but more often are independently responsible for a diverse range of tasks relating to a key departmental or university procedure, for example, admissions administrator or examinations officer.

When interviewing long-standing members of staff it was striking how they had adapted and developed their skills in order to meet the changing needs of their organisation and the demands of the students and the external environment. However, the difficulty in obtaining recognition for this remained and 'the tensions that exist between the traditional expectations of the administrative role and its increasing professionalisation remain largely unrecognised' (Wilkins, 1998:81).

Interviewee 6 had worked in higher education for thirty-two years and recalled how informal the work arrangements used to be. Many a Friday afternoon she was told that she might as well go home now as all the academic and students had left and there was nothing left to do. The radical changes associated with increased accountability and subsequent bureaucracy across the sector had changed this attitude to work dramatically. The pressures and requirements for multi-tasking had increased massively but she felt in many quarters the perception of the unskilled, female secretary remained the same.

As well as technological and organisational change, communication and social skills have become more important (Gaille and White, 1993:28). Social and technological skills are essential to the administration of academic departments as service providers, although they have yet to be accorded an equivalent level of importance (Wilkins, 1998:80). This

was reinforced by an interviewee who summed up the experiences of many clerical and administrative staff thus:

“When you think that generally we keep the day to day running of offices going, the acknowledgement of this is very poor. There is no recognition for good sense, organisation abilities and maturity which are often more important than qualifications for a good part of the role.” (Interviewee 28)

Eveline describes the work done by lower levels within universities as ‘glue work’. This work holds the university together but much of it is unseen and unsung (Eveline, 2004:138). She compares universities to other organisations who are reliant on glue work for the repairing and maintenance of human relationships and for the smooth functioning of their human driven systems. She gives a specific example of her own university who has relied on front-line staff to ‘re-establish operation, work conditions and departmental relationships after they had been ruptured by re-structuring’. (Eveline, 2004:138).

These ‘glue work’ skills referred to by Eveline were frequently mentioned by respondents and interviewees within this survey and it is this human relations work that women do that goes unacknowledged (Davies and Rosser, 1986:97). These skills do not require formal training and are not acknowledged as skills or rewarded in financial terms as they are seen as qualities that women just happen to have (Davies and Rosser, 1986:103). Davies and Rosser’s 1983 study on clerical staff within the NHS came to similar conclusions to that of Eveline that female clerical staff were the ones who ‘held things together’ (Davies and Rosser, 1986:104).



Interviewee 6 talked about how the clerical staff within her school had held things together following a radical re-structuring. Many departments were re-organised into larger schools and a new layer of management was introduced. Like Eveline's example above it was the lower grade staff who worked hard to maintain student services and who used their extensive knowledge to work together to integrate systems. The increasingly complex social skills that clerical and administrative staff have to utilise was also thought to be undervalued by their organisations. An increasingly large and diverse student body was also thought by many to demand an increase in the skills required by these front-line staff who often found themselves negotiating between students, academics and student services and providing a pastoral role for students in the absence of academic staff.

Interviewee 19 recalls how she is often confronted with distraught students with personal problems who had missed essay deadlines or who required course changes or leave of absence. Lacking the formal authority to grant extensions or transfers she often found herself staying late to ensure the student was referred to student support and assisted in applications for leave, extensions or even financial support. "Quite often I am the first person they see and the most familiar when they walk through the office door so I am expected to know the answer to everything and to be able to help them on the spot".

Interviewee 16 reported:

"Some days I feel that all I do is deal with 'people problems' – distraught students, disgruntled academics who blame me if they aren't happy with their teaching room or if the photocopier won't work, applicants who have been rejected and want to know why and even parents of potential and existing students who can't understand why I can't give them information on their son or daughter. I enjoy the challenge but it can

be quite exhausting on top of my 'normal' duties and it's certainly not in my job description.' (Interviewee 16)

This has been described as 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 2003:7) and is broadly defined as the management of emotions, the employees and others as being a key aspect of the job (Noon and Blyton, 2007:178). It is only relatively recently that emotional labour and its significance has been given attention by researchers as increasing importance has been placed on customer service within a competitive economy (ibid:178). Women are far more likely than men to be employed in jobs that include emotional labour and these skills tends to go under-recognised and under-rewarded in spite of being learned through considerable training and being performed in far from straightforward circumstances (ibid:206-207)

This undervaluation of women's skills is frequently institutionalised and consolidated by job evaluation schemes which fail to recognise or value the attributes of jobs performed by women (ibid:139). For example, job evaluation schemes frequently rate fiscal responsibilities higher than social skills and consequently these are frequently undervalued by employers (ibid:139). Cockburn identified three aspects of skill, the skill that resides in the person, the skill that resides in the job and the political definition of skill, that which a group of workers or a trade union can defend against the challenges of employers and other groups of workers (Cockburn, 1983:113). Many respondents within this research had been turned down for promotions as it is 'the job and not the person' (Respondents 10, 27, 32 and 45) who is been assessed. Analysing the skills required for the job is an approach typically taken by management theorists but it fails to take into account individual attributes and qualities that skill in the person concentrates on (Noon and Blyton, 2007:117). This method of assessing skills presents a particular problem for

women who frequently develop a multitude of skills within their role which are not recognised by formal processes.

Interviewees 3 and 7 had both been involved in their organisations' job re-grading processes and found it particularly frustrating that often they could not reward an exceptional member of staff as they were constantly been told to assess 'the job not the person'. One interviewee believed that this led to inequalities as:

"I could go to one department and see an undergraduate secretary for instance carrying out a fantastic job, practically running the undergraduate course on her own with little input from the manager or any academic staff. To be fair, in these instances the academics frequently recognised this and called for the re-grading. In another department I could then see a person on the same grade doing a fraction of the work. However, there was no chance of re-grading the exceptional performer as the scheme only recognised the job, not the person. The system just did not recognise some of the diverse roles that many staff took on and really did not encourage individuals to go beyond the minimum". (Interviewee 7)

Comments from the questionnaire around this area talked about how varied one clerical post could be from another but 'every-one gets lumped in together when jobs, not individuals are graded' (Respondent 74) and 'you get paid the same regardless of the amount of work you do and only get regraded if they consider you are working above your grade and this is very difficult to prove'. (Respondent 97).

Men have historically been pro-active in protecting and differentiating their skills from that of women and as work process have changed men sought to hang onto their skilled status

often to the detriment of women (Noon and Blyton, 2007:139-140). Chapter 2 looked specifically how male clerical trade unions also played a part in this by providing a means by which male workers could organise and exclude women from their trades (Noon and Blyton, 2007:140). Consequently this occupational group is further disadvantaged by the political and historical analysis of skill.

Many respondents in this study reported that technical skills were also more highly valued than administrative skills with greater importance placed on the ability to deal with a machine rather than the ability to deal with a student. Some also thought that clerical workers were graded lower when compared to technical staff as technical skills were often more highly thought of. One person reported that their university had a promotions policy for technical staff but not for clerical staff (Respondent 731). Clerical work has never recovered from the de-skilling and subsequent loss of status that occurred from the 1920's, and the under-valuation of skills traditionally associated with women is certainly a key element when considering the poorer pay for occupations dominated by women (Barrett, 1980; Philips and Taylor, 1980). Lee argues that 'the attribution of skill to particular occupations has always to be placed within specific historical locations' (Lee, 1981:56). Historically the feminising of clerical work led to it being perceived as a low-skilled occupation, thanks to the efforts of employers and male workers and trade unionists.

One interviewee was once part of a team that consisted of union representatives and senior management to look at applications for additional increments and ex-gratia payments based on exceptional performance. She noted and commented on how difficult it seemed for clerical staff to obtain additional rewards when compared with the technicians:

“One memorable meeting saw a (male) technical application approved that merely included a list of the number of call out the telephone engineer had had to deal with. It all seemed much of the same thing to me, just an increase in volume. At the same meeting a clerical application was turned down that included clear examples, very articulately written of all the additional responsibilities that the (female) clerical worker had taken on over the past few years. There was clearly an increase in the level of responsibility and the number and variation of tasks but this was not approved as the additional duties were considered to be unexceptional for the grade. What little encouragement this gives individuals to take on more duties when they can’t even receive a small reward for doing so and how inequitable I thought (and said). It seemed to me that the mere mention of technical skills led to the assumption that the role was more complex than the clerical role and hence the additional reward was justified. I hoped that the new grading system that came in after the Framework Agreement would rectify this but, as yet, I can’t see any evidence of this.” (Interviewee 8).

There were many comments in the survey about the undervaluation of clerical and administrative roles when compared to those of technicians including ‘clerical staff are graded lower than technical staff doing similar work’ (Respondent 25) and ‘clerical skills are seen as second class when compared to technical skills’ (Respondent 693). An analysis of the job families that are used to match individuals to grades seems to support the assertion that the Framework Agreement has done little to equalise the requirements for higher grade posts. In one example, the requirements for a Grade 5 technician run to one and a quarter pages compared to over two pages for a Grade 5 secretary. For a Grade 6 technician the job description is a little over a page compared to two and a half pages for the Grade 6 secretary and clerical job. The table 6.1 illustrates the different

requirements for the roles under the section 'Representative Knowledge, Skills & Experience'

**Table 6.1: A comparison of grade 5 technical skills to clerical skills**

Grade 5 Technician	Grade 5 Clerical and Administrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Technical or scientific education to ONC or equivalent or NVQ3 level.</li> <li>➤ Proficient user of specialist software packages.</li> <li>➤ Prior technical work experience,</li> <li>➤ Well developed understanding of Health and Safety regulations and procedures.</li> </ul>	<p>Either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Either academic or vocational qualifications (NVQ 3, general education to A Level standard , or equivalent plus demonstrated competence through experience in a relevant role;</li> <li>Or</li> <li>➤ Development of relevant skills through previous on-the-job training and demonstrated competence in other administrative roles.</li> </ul> <p>Plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Working knowledge of MS-Office systems, equipment, processes and procedures including high grade proficiency in relevant software packages.</li> <li>➤ Initiative and judgment to resolve many problems independently.</li> <li>➤ Ability to communicate clearly orally and in writing to ensure effective reporting and customer/contact handling</li> <li>➤ Numeracy skills.</li> <li>➤ Good I.T. skills.</li> <li>➤ Familiarity with own work priorities and those of colleagues.</li> <li>➤ Understanding of relevant policies and procedures, as they affect the role, and the quality standards and outputs required.</li> <li>➤ Ability to apply relevant health and safety and other University policies and procedures.</li> <li>➤ Where relevant, ability to train/develop and supervise other staff.</li> <li>➤ Ability to assess data and information, and to identify problems.</li> </ul>
Grade 6 Technician	Grade 6 Clerical and Administrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Technical or scientific education to HNC or NVQ4 level</li> <li>➤ May have a degree or equivalent in a relevant technical or technological field</li> <li>➤ Expertise with relevant office and other software packages</li> <li>➤ Prior relevant work experience.</li> <li>➤ Well developed understanding of Health and Safety regulations and procedures.</li> <li>➤ Supervisory experience (where appropriate)</li> <li>➤ Depth or breadth of knowledge in a particular area of technical expertise and be recognised as a technical expert in this</li> </ul>	<p>Either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Higher education qualification and in addition, part professional qualification or relevant work experience</li> </ul> <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Broad vocational experience, acquired through a combination of job related vocational training and considerable on-the-job experience, demonstrating development through involvement in a series of progressively more demanding relevant work/roles.</li> </ul>

area.	<p>Plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Experience of working with relevant specialised equipment,</li> <li>➤ Advanced user of relevant software and/or procedures.</li> <li>➤ Experience of working/responding independently and dealing with unforeseen problems and circumstances.</li> <li>➤ Comprehensive knowledge of the work practices, policies, processes and procedures relevant to the role.</li> <li>➤ Ability to interpret relevant processes and to develop and implement improvements.</li> <li>➤ Operating knowledge of service/systems/processes in own area that would be required to provide first line advice and guidance, typically of a more technical/specialised nature, to customers.</li> <li>➤ Clear understanding of the standards and regulations set for the conduct and output for the role.</li> <li>➤ Working knowledge of the activities of other areas of the university and external parties relevant to faculty/directorate/work unit.</li> <li>➤ Proven written and verbal communication skills.</li> <li>➤ Proven management skills (where relevant)</li> <li>➤ Ability to plan and organise resources.</li> </ul>
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**Source: University website**

There is undoubtedly a higher bar for those wishing to pursue a career on the clerical and administrative grades than those on the technical grades which is clearly illustrated by the far broader skills requirements for the higher grade clerical posts.

Long-serving members of staff reported phenomenal changes in the types of duties they have taken on over the years. Interviewees 5 and 6 both talked about the huge technological changes that the sector had seen from the late 1980s onwards which had seen staff learning to adapt to completely new ways of working. This coupled with the dramatic increase in student numbers had changed their roles way beyond the traditional administrative role that they have initially undertaken.

One interviewee reported how it was often the administrative staff who were expected to lead the way with the new technology:

“We were all expected to learn to use computers when they first appeared in the department and, often without any formal training, became the word processing experts and helped the academic staff get to grips with the packages. I even wrote a short manual which was used throughout my department and passed around other departments as well. Since then there has been e-mail, the internet, complex student and financial records systems and more recently virtual learning environment. We’ve taken on the lot more often than not without any additional rewards – it was just expected of you and we all got on with it”. (Interviewee 6)

Many comments from the questionnaire referred to the increase in workloads in the changing higher education environment. Comments included ‘clerical workloads have increased due to strategic management decisions and management often just expect clerical staff to get on with it’ (Respondent 224) and ‘more and more work cascades down from senior management’ (Respondent 500).

Part-time workers are particularly prone to undervaluation of the skill of their job which may be because of the generally held attitude that part-time work is marginal employment (Horrell, Rubery and Burchell, 2000:220). Part-time workers often felt they were graded lower than those in full-time roles as, instead of looking at the skills required for the role, they were undervalued and exploited because of their choice to work part-time. Comments from the survey included ‘part-time workers are not as valued as full-time workers (Respondent 485); part-time workers are exploited (Respondent 591); and ‘part-time workers are seen as not as committed as full-time staff’ (Respondent 2).



Academic staff usually take on administrative roles on a rotational basis with administrative staff providing organisational stability and continuity (Wilkins, 1998:86). This often leads to work substitution with additional contributions, rather than being recognised, disappearing 'credited to some-one else's work under the departmental system where heads of school gain the credits for work of women staff in a way not possible with technicians' (Eveline 2004:149); upskilling is undoubtedly occurring but with no consequent remuneration. Clerical and administrative staff often found themselves having to make quite high level decisions in the absence of academic staff or take on certain roles such as providing course information for prospectuses and giving talks to prospective students. However, these skills are not part of official job descriptions and are therefore not recognised. 'A major factor in maintaining obstacles impeding career development is the lack of recognition and hence value placed on the growing complexity of tasks performed and responsibilities assumed by secretaries' (Wilkins, 1998:79).

Academic or management staff were very willing for support staff to carry out work on their behalf but were not so keen in giving them credit for it. Interviewee 4 talked about the difficulty obtaining recognition for work that she did above the scope of her job description. She was a PA who worked for a fairly senior manager who frequently asked her to obtain and analyse detailed information and to write reports for him. He would then 'collate' the information into his own report and pass the work off as his own. No acknowledgement was given to the knowledge and skill of the PA as the output from this work was seen as the responsibility of the manager. One survey respondent reported that her ten years office management experience was often exploited by more senior members of staff who took credit for her work. It was impossible under these circumstances to obtain any financial recognition for what she actually did and the skills she had gained throughout her experience within the sector (Respondent 201).

Another interviewee talked about the difficulties she had over the years in obtaining recognition for additional responsibilities:

“In the old days, by that I mean in the late 80s and 90s, I was frequently told that I could not include certain things in my application for re-grading as they were the responsibility of academics even when I had taken over the role completely, like accuracy of exam results. I, and a lot of others I know, were turned down for additional increments or higher grades because we were told that the academic had the ultimate responsibility even when he wasn’t even around when the work was done. Eventually these roles became absorbed into the grade and now we are told it’s just part of the job that we do when at one time it was part of a role that paid twice as much as we earn.” (Interviewee 21)

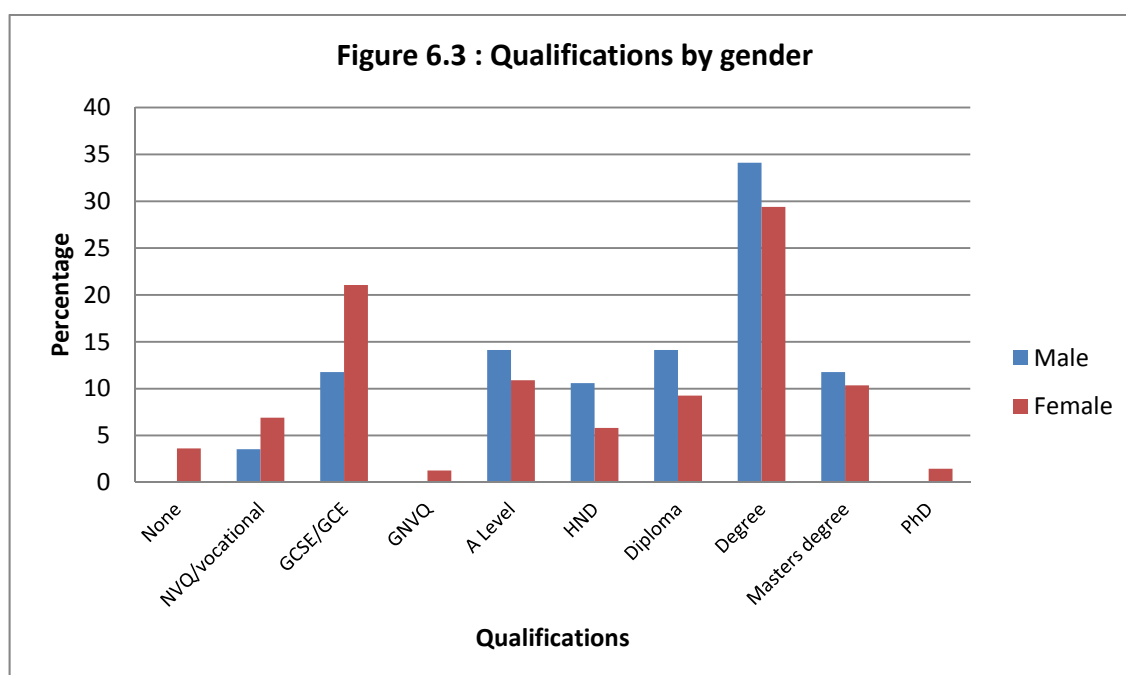
Another interviewee reported a head of school saying to her when she raised the issue of poor rewards for clerical staff “what I think they appreciate more than monetary rewards is the acknowledgement they have done a good job.”. “Easy to say when you are paid £150,000 a year”. (Interviewee 8).

New management structures within institutions were also seen by many as being disadvantageous to clerical and administrative work. Interviewee 21 talked about the development a few years ago at her institution of the ‘model office’. This human resource driven initiative initially seemed to be to the advantage of staff as it promised improved prospects for staff who were able to take administrative duties from academic staff. However, the reality was a little different. Many staff were keen to take this opportunity and volunteered for additional duties. These however, were not automatically awarded, and lengthy and, sometimes unsuccessful, re-grading applications had to follow. By this

time staff had absorbed the additional duties. Going forward, many found themselves at a continuous disadvantage as the grade within the 'model office' were fixed and therefore individuals could not apply for re-gradings. They were simply told that they were part of the new 'model office' and therefore they could no longer grow their jobs.

Many respondents also felt that economic pressures had resulted in skills which were once considered 'professional' were now being classed as clerical. An example which came was raised a number of times was that of library assistants who felt they were undertaking duties that had once been the remit of qualified librarians with a consequent undervaluation of their skills and hence their remuneration.

Human Capital Theorists (Mincer,1962; Becker, 1991) would suggest a fairly straightforward explanation for women's clustering in lower paid occupations, a simple lack of human capital in terms of educational attainment and training. These theories are analysed fully in Chapter 2. However, the survey evidence strongly refutes this. The table below shows the qualifications of the sample:



38 per cent of the respondents had a degree or higher degree which makes them the highest qualified clerical group within the public sector (Richards, 2008:16). Only 3 per cent had no qualifications. There was very little difference between the qualifications obtained by the male respondents compared to the female respondents although women were more likely to have no qualification or vocational qualifications (11 per cent) compared to men (4per cent). A small percentage of women (1 per cent) had a PhD whereas no male respondents did.

Age was the bigger determinant of qualification with 81 per cent of those with no qualifications being over 51 years old compared to 20 per cent of those between 31 and 50- years and no-one under 30 year. Similarly the number of those who had degrees or higher degrees declined steadily with age. 51.8 per cent of those aged 21-30 had degrees or higher degrees compared to 49 per cent of those aged 31-40 years, 31.5 per cent of those aged 41-50 years, 30.9 per cent aged 51-60 years and 27.8 per cent of those aged 61 years plus. This could be because of the general increase in women's education achievements over the past few decades or because graduates are more likely to move on with experience. The occupation does however appear to be attracting highly qualified individuals. However, the increase in the number of graduates into the profession is not necessarily a good thing according to a number of respondents as older, less qualified staff found it even harder to obtain recognition for their work based on their skills and experience. As the number of those entering the profession with a degree increases this becomes the norm for many jobs that would previously have been non-graduate roles leaving those without degrees feeling they have no chance of progression. Others reported that graduates 'who tend not to stay long in the post' are more likely to be

promoted. 'Although my university claims to recognise relevant experience as a substitute for a degree, it is impossible to move from a clerical grade to a grade 7 administrative grade without one' (Respondent 7); 'Experience and skills are not taken into consideration when recruiting for these posts' (Respondent 517); 'I applied for a higher position and was told I needed a degree' (Respondent 621). Performance, length of service, loyalty and hard work were not attributes that respondents thought were particularly valued and certainly not rewarded. However, others with degrees claimed that their qualifications were not considered and they were not 'paid accordingly'.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

Occupational structures that developed from the dual influences of capitalist development and patriarchal attitudes to women remain remarkably resistant to change. The history of clerical work and indeed of higher education clearly illustrates how the sector developed into highly gender segregated organisations. This organisational structure persists as, although Universities promote equality of opportunity they are, in fact, bureaucratic organisations with heavily gendered hierarchies that have largely remained unchallenged over time. Work organisation within higher education today remains reflective of society as a whole with women highly segregated into certain feminised roles. Figure 1.1 (Chapter 1) showed the extent of this segregation by activity, mode of employment and gender and clearly horizontal segregation is most prolific for clerical and related occupations. This segregation causes considerable implications for gender equality that has been largely ignored. Equality issues have centred around opportunities for women to enter occupations previously open mainly to men, and in higher education, the rise in the number of female academics has been one outcome of this. However, the clerical

workgroup has not been subjected to desegregation and has therefore remained largely ignored.

Within a highly segregated workforce it is easy for inequality issues to become invisible with the resultant lack of awareness being either intentional or unintentional (Acker, 2006:452b). Patterns of invisibility/visibility of inequality vary with the basis for the inequality (ibid:452). Within academic staff grades inequalities, especially in pay, may be more visible as academic grades contain roughly the same proportions of men and women. Within highly gendered occupations this is not so easy. Gender inequalities tend to disappear in organisations or are seen as something that is beside the point of the organisation (ibid:452). For this group the tendency of the employers is to ascribe the gender segregation as reflective of women's occupational choice and to leave well alone. This would not be so unacceptable were it not for the disadvantages of the segregated workforce especially in the analysis of skill and subsequent remuneration.

Female occupations such as clerical work tend to stress personal and social relationships and these types of relationships are not given great weight in job evaluation schemes (Horrell, Rubery and Burchell, 2003:220). However, as well as social skills this survey showed that clerical and administrative staff across the sector carried out a huge range of tasks and often had responsibility for key areas within their sector such as admissions or examinations. There was also evidence of up skilling which was particularly apparent when talking to long serving staff members. However, perception of skill and job content are also very much influenced by the current status attached to jobs and the respondents frequently felt that their status within the organisation was undervalued, especially those who work part-time. Part-time workers within the survey seemed particularly ghettoised into lower level administrative jobs and were more likely to have job titles such as library

assistant, receptionist or administration assistant. There also appears to be evidence to suggest that it was easier to obtain recognition for technical skills and certainly the requirements for higher grade clerical and administrative roles appeared to be broader than those for technicians. However, as this was not a comparative study, further research would be required to establish this absolutely.

The effects of occupational segregation on women workers is not just reflected in pay, highly segregated groups are treated unfavourably on a range of issues which in turn disadvantage their chances of progressing within their organisations. This research now moves on to explore these inequalities and their effects.

## **Chapter 7: Inequalities within Higher Education**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Universities are deeply gendered organisations (Eveline, 2004; Quinn, 2003). In spite of raft of legislation, policies and procedures, and equality and diversity agendas they continue to reproduce many of the traditional gender roles and expectations both by the use of practices that discourage many groups of women from progressing through the hierarchy and through underlying discrimination in the day to day management of groups of female staff. Described by Acker as inequality regimes these practice and procedures maintain the ordering of positions and people in a way that reproduces class, gender and racial inequalities (Acker, 2006:334b).

This research into clerical and administrative staff found that universities and their managers do not consider themselves to be discriminatory and in some respects go to great pains to avoid discriminatory practices by, for example, training staff in recruitment processes in order to avoid discrimination and the possibility of legal action, and spending copious amounts of time ensuring that all policies and procedures are equality impact assessed. However, none of these efforts has challenged the institutional discrimination that, although not unique to higher education, continues to hamper the career prospects of a good proportion of its staff.

Emerging from the study were a number of examples of unequal treatment at many levels. For example, access to training was often difficult and promotion very hard to obtain, as was the ability to access flexible working arrangements, a particularly important issue for an occupational group that is predominantly female. This discrimination occurred at many different levels from institutional level to the day to day management of staff. Often,



even when there was legislation or clear procedures available to ensure equity they were interpreted differently by managers and it was not unusual to see a variety of practises occurring across one institution.

This chapter examines the key themes that have emerged from the research that illustrate how institutionalised discriminatory practices hamper the career prospects of clerical and administrative staff within the higher education sector. It draws upon both survey and interview evidence which is linked, where possible, to previous research on the subject of discrimination within higher education.

## **7.2 The position of clerical and administrative staff in the university hierarchy**

The introductory chapter included a brief history of women's role in British Universities and suggested that their delayed access could be seen as limiting the effect that women may have on the modern university (Halverson, 2002:348). It was also suggested that the persistence of a gender and status hierarchy doubly disadvantages clerical and administrative staff within higher education and this was tested within this research. A good proportion of survey respondents reported that they were treated with respect by the students with 57.8 per cent either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. However, only 46.8 per cent felt that academic staff treated them with the same respect as other academics and 56 per cent felt there was a class divide between academic staff and clerical staff. In the few pieces of published work available on this occupational group, University support staff have been described as "underpaid and overlooked" (Atkinson, 2001:1) or as "like servants in a Victorian household" (Kelly and Leicester, 1996:108). Atkinson (2001:1) claims that universities have "a history that is yet to be shed: an endemic, institutionalized base of sexism, racism, class snobbery and intellectual elitism."

Likewise Eveline (2004), Castleman and Allen (1995) and Dobson (2000) also concluded that there was a divide between academic and support staff with a subsequent devaluing of the work carried out by clerical, administrative and other support staff. Consequently, in spite of the high level qualifications held by a good proportion of this group and of the complexities and importance of their roles they still appear to be perceived by many to be an inferior and insignificant workgroup when compared to academic staff.

Many subjects of this study noted the poor perception of clerical staff when compared to academics. Typical quotes include 'Clerical work is undervalued compared to academic work' (Respondent 718); 'Academic staff have priority on everything (Respondent 248)'. 'Non-academic contracts are incorrectly assumed to involve less intellectually challenging work than academics' (Respondent 421); 'Not seen as important as academic staff – we support the academic staff' (Respondent 32); 'Academic staff are valued more and admin staff are seen as background workers who are not important' (Respondent 50);. Interviewee 6 (team leader and UNISON officer) recalls an academic complaining that the new Dean 'was a very rude man, he spoke to me like I was a secretary' thus implying that more deference is required when communicating with academics than with administrative staff. However, it is not just academics who are perceived to treat administrative and clerical staff poorly. Some interviewees also spoke of a negative attitude towards them from management staff (previously academically related staff). Interviewee 4 (Personal Assistant) reported how she was frequently 'discouraged and put down' by the male manager for whom she worked who seemed to have a 'very old fashioned view of women. He thinks I am only fit to make phone calls for him and provide him with cups of tea.'

This divide is re-enforced by 'gendered work space' (Eveline, 2004:144). Academic and management staff generally have their own office space which is 'owned' by the staff

member and affords privacy and quiet when required. Office staff, however, usually work in in larger groups, often with little potential for privacy and constant interruptions from academics, students and visitors. As space becomes a premium in our expanding and increasingly over-crowded universities, this becomes an increasing problem for staff. Interviewees spoke of the difficulty of managing increasingly complex workloads within noisy working environments and with frequent interruptions. Interviewee 9 described working in a medium- sized office that housed up to five clerical staff at any one time and included a reception and a rear door used by academic staff. Staff found it very difficult to concentrate during busy times in the academic year and to manage their time in the face of constant disruptions. In contrast the technicians, the academics and the School Manager all had their own offices which added to the workload of the clerical staff as they effectively became the gatekeepers for these other staff members as well as dealing with students, academic staff and their own administrative workload.

Eveline suggests that this gendered workspace further divides the staff into two cultures and that this divide has a gender dimension which allocates the emotional labour to particular jobs and spaces, mainly occupied by women (Eveline, 2004:145-146). One interviewee also recognised the space issue as a gender issue

‘it is only female staff within this organisation who work in crowded areas with public access. Sure some technicians work in large rooms but no-one can get in without ringing a bell or knowing the access code. We are expected to take on more and more work whilst dealing with every visitor, student and disgruntled academic that passes through the department. Men just wouldn’t do this, there would be uproar, but it is taken as normal for female clerical staff to work like this and the recent emphasis on the student experience is making it harder to put any restrictions on

office opening times, even over what was traditionally our dinner break.’

(Interviewee 6)

This gendered space also further re-enforces the divide between support and academic staff and the perception that clerical work is of relatively little significance and can be done as a side-line to other jobs.

Part-time clerical and administrative workers felt that their position within the organisational hierarchy was even poorer. Respondents made frequent comments about their poor position and these were reported in the Chapter 6. This is in keeping with research on part-time workers which concluded that part-time workers felt marginalised and for many part-time work symbolised the ‘death knell for career development’ (Jenkins, 2004:329). The particular concerns of part-time workers are important to any study on working women and indeed for this particular occupational group as 39.5 per cent of clerical and administrative staff within higher education work part-time compared to only 20 per cent of management, professional and technical staff (HESA, 2012: Table C). This is higher than the percentage of part-time workers across the UK economy which stood at 27 per cent in 2011 and also higher than across the EU as a whole where 20 per cent of workers are part-time (Office for National Statistics, 2013). The percentage of part-time clerical and administrative staff across the sector has also increased by 6,480 from 23,020 in 2003/4 to 29,500 in 2009/10 compared to an increase of only 3,065 in full-time posts over the same period (<http://www.hesa.ac.uk>). In addition 84 per cent of the part-time clerical and administrative workers in higher education are female compared to 75 per cent of part-time workers classed as managerial, professional and technical and 74 per cent of those classed as manual (HESA, 2012: Table C).

From the survey data it is clear that part-time staff are particularly ghettoised into low grade, low paid and low status jobs. They are more likely to be in the lower three grades than full-time staff and are more likely to have job titles such as 'admin assistant'; 'library assistant'; 'clerical assistant'; or 'accounts assistant'. They are also less likely to apply for promotion than full-time staff and, when they do so, be less likely to succeed. All these factors point to part-time clerical and administrative staff as being situated even further down the higher education hierarchy with very little chance for progression. As the economy as a whole shifts further in favour of part-time employment the issue of poor pay and career prospects for part-time staff regardless of where they work becomes an increasingly important issue.

Trade union organisation across the sector also firmly separates the academics and managers from other staff. Chapter 4 chartered the development of trade unions for this sector of staff using the little available evidence. The domination of UCU at most branches results in the potential for unintentional side-lining of clerical and administrative staff both at branch level. This was specifically mentioned by interviewee 3 and interviewee 7 who were or who had been UNISON officers. Although interviewee 7 remarked that there had been great improvements at branch level in cross union collaborations, she still felt that UNISON was at a disadvantage to UCU as UCU is the largest trade union within the organisation with the potential for greater influence on management practices and procedures. Likewise, interviewees who had attended national conferences found them dominated by the larger workgroups such as health and local government.

### 7.3 Terms and conditions of employment

Subjects were asked whether or not they thought their terms and conditions of employment were favourable when compared to other members of staff. 43.3 per cent of the sample thought that their terms of employment were unfair when compared to other categories of staff. Slightly more men (49.5 per cent) than women (42.3 per cent) believed this to be so. When asked where the terms of employment were unfair the following responses were given:

**Table 7.1: Why are your terms of employment unfair? (multiple responses are possible)**

	Male	Female
Non-response	49 per cent	55 per cent
Flexible working patterns	19 per cent	22 per cent
Annual Leave	25 per cent	27 per cent
Promotion Prospects	31 per cent	26 per cent
Pension provision	16 per cent	10 per cent
Access to staff development	20 per cent	9 per cent
Other	10 per cent	4 per cent

Annual leave, promotion prospects and access to flexible working patterns were the most cited areas of perceived inequity. This was also borne out in interviews and in comments made by respondents. For women flexible working promotion prospects and annual leave were the biggest areas of concern and for men promotion prospects, annual leave and access to staff development. However, men were also more likely to consider their pension provision to be unfair.

#### **7.4 (i) Flexible working**

When asked to comment on the questionnaire, and also during the interviews, the issue that was mentioned the most and which prompted the most discussion was lack of flexibility. There are two sides to 'flexible working', one as a consequence of individuals being employed on non-standard contracts which are mainly advantageous to businesses (Dex, and McCulloch, 1995:1). These include contracts with no guaranteed hours or with irregular hours. The other side is flexibility afforded to the employee by the employer to allow them to have some control over their working hours.

Many respondents pointed out that academic staff have far more flexibility over their working hours and are able to work from home and work around childcare. Many clerical and administrative staff were expected to work rigid, set hours regardless of the time of year. This was seen as a problem by both men and women but especially by the female respondents. This was mainly seen as a problem for full-time staff but some part-time staff also commented on the lack of flexibility. One respondent reported that staff within her section had to prove that they had hospital or dental appointments by showing the appointment card to their line manager. This led staff to booking annual leave rather than going through the humiliation of having to prove they were telling the truth, 'like when I was at school' (Respondent 18). Often 'flexible working' works only in favour of the institution. One University introduced a clocking in system for support staff but it was not linked to flexi-time and many others reported that they would be asked to work additional hours in busy periods but the same flexibility was not afforded to them when they required it (Respondent 523). Another reported 'we are allowed to build up twenty-two hours flexi-time a month but only to take one day back so frequently I lose the hours I have accrued.' (Respondent 6). Some reported having to take half a day's leave if they merely wanted an

hour off and many commented on the fact that academic staff could work from home whereas clerical and administrative staff were never allowed to do this whatever the circumstances. Flexible working was often seen as a one-way street with one respondent stating 'we are expected to work over our contracted hours to meet work demands (like academics) but still obliged to maintain regular and precise hours during office hours' (Respondent 714).

The introductory chapter outlined the legislation designed to offer flexibility at work to those with caring and family responsibilities. However, in spite of this legislation on flexible working, many interviewees still reported difficulties obtaining even the smallest of concessions and it would appear that very few higher education establishments have established flexible working policies. Interviewee 12 asked to start work half an hour later when returning to work following the birth of her daughter and was made to feel 'difficult and demanding'. The request was eventually granted but not without the manager calling a number of formal meetings and the involvement of UNISON. Interviewee 6 asked to leave at 4.30 pm to prepare food for her elderly parents for whom she was a registered carer. This was initially refused and, again with the support of UNISON, was taken through very formal and rather formidable channels where the individual had to justify their request to their line manager and seek formal approval. This was eventually granted but only on a temporary basis. One respondent actually had to take a down-grade after having to care for a sick partner and 'when I was ready to go back again I had to apply for my original job back'. Interviewee 18 asked to finish early one day as her husband had injured his back and she needed to pick their children up from school. Upon hearing her request her manager asked if she was 'sure she had enough work to do'.



There appeared to be a distinct lack of clarity and guidance on flexible working from University Human Resource Departments and an absence of clear policies. Even within individual universities the availability of flexible working hours varied considerably from between departments with some offering flexible working and others being extremely inflexible. Many reported a 'do as I say and not as I do' attitude from their managers who were either academic related or on the highest clerical and administrative grades. Frequently respondents reported managers who allowed themselves flexible working but refused any flexibility for the staff who worked for them. There were even considerable differences of opinion within institutions. Interviewee 2 when asked about flexible working reported:

'there's flexibility for the academic staff and for me but not for the support staff, they need to be here all the time'.

However, another school manager at the same institution was a real supporter of flexi-time:

'I can't see the logic within an educational institution of having all support staff working 9 – 5 all year round when there are peaks and troughs. My staff are generally happy to work additional hours during examinations or the start of term as they know they will get their hours back during quieter periods, and it helps them to keep on top of their work during these busy times. I wouldn't want to deal with the ill-will that lack of flexibility causes either – it's so un-necessary but some managers are so suspicious about offering flexible working and are convinced that staff will take advantage. In my experience this is not the case – it helps to motivate and develops loyalty to the school'. (Interviewee 8)

However, even when the university has a flexible working policy it may not always be adhered to. One respondent reported 'our university has a flexible working policy but my line manager doesn't agree with it so we have to work set hours' (Respondent 15).

Although there have been few studies on the benefits of flexible working, a study by Dex (2003) concluded that flexible working tended not to reduce business performance and can actually enhance performance and the employees view of the employer (Dex, 2003:38). It was clear from this current research how much employees valued the opportunity to have some control over their working hours and how few managers were willing to afford them this concession. However, the lack of a co-ordinated approach to flexible working was also very clear. Devolved management into schools and department meant that treatment was extremely varied as there was lack of any central management input into the day to day running of units. Managers did not seem to think of the provision of flexible working as an equalities issue which it clearly is as caring responsibilities fall primarily onto women. Branch union officers tended to deal with the issue of flexibility on a case by case basis rather than as a campaign issue. Interviewee 23 (UNISON officer) admitted issues around flexible working added to her caseload but felt that she could not get the University's human resource department to issue clear guidelines as it was seen as a local issue and down to individual managers to decide upon.

The lack of availability of flexible working hours leaves many women with the only option of working part-time following maternity leave although one respondent reported she 'had to fight to get part-time hours after being on maternity leave' (Respondent 49). Another reported that following a period of maternity leave her flexible hours were changed to contracted hours (Respondent 613). Many of those who did work part-time described particular problems associated with this. Even part-time staff found themselves in the

position of being unable to work flexible hours across their working week and a number reported difficulties when they were required to work additional hours. Most Universities would not pay part-time staff for any additional hours until they had worked up to the maximum required hours for full-time staff. Instead they were offered time in lieu which often resulted in so many hours being accrued during busy times or when covering staff absences that it became impossible to take them without building up large workloads. This was also seen as an issue by the managers who were interviewed. One school manager reported :

'I don't feel that I can ask the part-time staff to do additional hours when we are busy as it quickly becomes impossible for them to take the hours back and when they do, work builds up again so that the additional effort soon becomes pointless'.  
(Interviewee 8).

Part-time staff also felt excluded from any career opportunities and frequently described being part-time as 'dead-end' with 'no prospects'. Part-time staff also reported that higher level jobs were not offered to them because they worked part-time. Indeed, there did not appear to be many part-time jobs available at higher grades. Only 13 per cent of those working part-time all year round were Grade 6 or above and this fell to just 8 per cent for those working part-time term-time only. Job shares, which were once seen as a better alternative to part-time work, seemed few and far between and again generally restricted to the lower grades. Few Universities appeared to actively promote job sharing which one respondent summed up as 'a lack of clarity on job shares from both employers and the union'(Respondent 3). As 40 per cent of clerical and administrative staff work part-time (HESA, 2010:Table 10) this lack of career prospects has serious implications for these, mainly female, workers.

However, in spite of the numerous comments around the lack of flexible working when asked about conflicts between their job and domestic arrangements only 19 per cent reported conflicts with 73 per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement 'there is conflict between my job and my domestic commitments'. However, one explanation of this is that women do not seek out senior appointment because of domestic responsibilities. Those who claimed there were conflicts between their work and home life were more likely to be in the higher salary brackets, for example, 22 per cent of those who felt their job conflicted with their home life earned over £26,000 compared to only 14 per cent of those who earned between £14,001 and £18,000. In interviews it became apparent that some women 'chose' to remain at the lower grades rather than face the challenges of combining their domestic commitments with a high level job. This tended to be a feature more associated with older employees. For example, one interviewee who has worked in the sector for thirty-six years spoke of how she had worked full-time, then part-time when her children were small and then back to full-time working when they were older. She claimed:

'I always do what I have to do but don't want to be in the position where I have to take work home as I have commitments out of the office which would make this unacceptable. However, looking back, I do sometimes wish I had done more and pushed a bit more for higher grades.' (Interviewee 5).

Interviewee 6 with thirty-two years' service spoke of how she was 'happy where she was even though I can't see me progressing any-more. I have reached the level of team co-ordinator which is higher than I thought I would be.' This interviewee had also worked part-time when her children were small because of the difficulty of combining childcare

with a career and had then returned to full-time work when the children were more independent. She reported that:

‘there is some flexibility in working arrangements today and for those with young children today there is legislation to help. We had no flexibility or allowances for the fact we had children. It was impossible to progress your career without expensive childcare and this lowers your expectations’. (interviewee 5)

The cost of childcare is still prohibitive to many working parents. The average cost of a nursery place is £5,103 per annum per child (<http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/childcare-costs-surveys.html>). Even workers who are able to claim full childcare support from the government only received up to 70 per cent of their childcare costs (Direct Gov, 2012) leaving a substantial cost, especially when two or more children require day care. Although the availability of childcare has improved dramatically since the 1980s, it is still a problem for many women. One respondent reported she had difficulty managing on her salary because of the rising cost of childcare. Interviewee 9 had worked part-time since becoming a mother. The children were carefully planned to ensure one was able to start state school before the younger child required expensive nursery care but still the costs involved in after school and day care were disproportionate to the interviewee’s salary and she felt that working full-time would not have been worth the additional costs. This interviewee was an ambitious graduate who previously worked in a managerial role and reported that she would like to return to a full-time career in the future. However, she was concerned that she was becoming pigeon-holed into ‘the stereotype of a department secretary’ and would therefore find it difficult to get her career back on track when the children were older. In addition, she reported a ‘complete lack of part-time opportunities at above a grade 4 within

her organisation'. This inevitably meant that she was unable to progress and obtain the requisite experience for the higher grades and consequently she was worried that it would take so long for her to catch up that she would never aspire to a management role again.

#### **7.4 (ii) Leave entitlement**

Inequalities in annual leave provision were also mentioned by a number of respondents, with holiday entitlement and restrictions on when holidays could be taken frequently mentioned as problematic. Although all staff across the sector now share a common pay spine, in many institutions other terms and conditions such as holiday entitlement, still vary between the different categories of staff. Many reported a significant difference in the number of days leave entitlement between academic and academic related staff when compared to clerical and administrative staff with differences varying between eight and ten days. This was a particular area of discontent amongst the respondents who seemed unable to find any justification for this inequality other than custom and practice within the sector. Academic related staff frequently manage clerical and administrative staff and in many institutions received more generous leave entitlement to those who they manage. This results in lower grade staff covering for the managers when they are on annual leave. Respondents also said they are more likely to have restrictions on when annual leave could be taken than other categories of staff. Many reported difficulties obtaining time off when required and arbitrary rules were often imposed on times when leave could be taken. Some reported that they were only allowed to take leave at certain times, usually during school holidays, when it was more expensive to go on holiday. Some could not afford to go away at these peak times but are prevented from taking leave at other quieter times during the term. Unfilled vacancies and cutbacks also made it difficult for a number of individuals to take annual leave.

The availability of time off for dependent care was also varied widely. Some women reported having to use annual leave to care for sick children or to take them to hospital appointments. In some cases this resulted in 'the temptation to pretend it is you who is ill and to take sick leave. Otherwise annual leave disappears and you are left with a problem covering the childcare over school holidays' (Respondent 34). Others found their line managers far more accommodating, enabling them to take additional leave for domestic emergencies and to work from home if need be.

#### **7.4 (iii) Pension provision**

16 per cent of men and 10 per cent of women believed their pension provision was poorer than other categories of staff within the university. Within many Universities there are two pension schemes. USS (University Superannuation Scheme) is a large national scheme and was, until relatively recently, only open to academic staff. Many Universities therefore have their own pension scheme for support staff. These schemes are often not as good as USS in terms of final benefits and this was seen as an issue for some of respondents who mentioned the different pension provision in comments such as 'academic staff have better pension provision' (Respondent 39) and 'our pension scheme is small and now closed to new members so I do worry about my retirement fund (Respondent 62). As pension provision is a complex and frequently individual issue, it is beyond the scope of this research. However, the mere existence of two schemes again illustrates the divide between support and academic staff across the sector.

## **7.5 Staff development and training**

Respondents were asked whether they had good access to staff development and training both in the questionnaire and also, in more depth, in the interviews. Although only 10 per cent of full and part-time respondents thought they were disadvantaged in access to training there were a number of comments that linked problems accessing staff development with chances of promotion and career development. Interviewee 19 described the staff development at her university as 'woeful and not designed to help staff into the next grade'. Interviewee 10 when asked about the poor staff development that was offered to administrative and clerical staff claimed that it was not up to the University to offer training for the next grade as 'we may well be training people in skills they won't need'. Consequently many institutions basically offered nothing for their existing staff to assist them with career progression.

The situation was often worse for part-time staff although this was not reflected in the survey results. Interviewee 15 reported that as she worked part-time on a small project there was no time to spare for staff development. Consequently she had no staff development for the past three years. She reported that she would like to leave as she had a degree and did not want to continue working 'in a low grade admin job'. However, she felt that the lack of staff development over recent years may be a hindrance when applying for higher grade jobs. Interviewee 20 also reported a similar problem. She was told she could not have time off to attend a course whilst only working thirty hours per week. As a single parent who was unable to drive due to a medical condition it was not possible for her to attend the two evenings per week that provided the only alternative to the day course until her child was older. Consequently she felt 'stuck at this level for some years'. Another respondent reported that full-time staff within her section had been



given time off to complete the European Computing Driving Licence whereas part-time staff had not (Respondent 17). Such inconsistent policies on training are clearly discriminatory as they are more likely to impact on women with childcare responsibilities than other groups.

A number of respondents reported difficulties obtaining staff development and even instances where managers had prevented staff members from attending even internal training courses if they were not directly related to their jobs. This made it impossible to obtain the additional skills required to gain promotion. Interviewee 6 recalled her manager refusing her leave to attend a free internal training course on the university's purchasing system as it was not directly relevant to her job. Most jobs the next grade up to hers required the use of this system and she felt that this refusal would hamper any chances she had at promotion.

Courses available to administrative and clerical staff were often very specific to the jobs that they did, for example, one respondent claimed that 'there is little career path and very little staff development other than updating IT skills which is mainly for the benefit of the institution' (Respondent 713). Few had been given the opportunity to study for a degree or other higher qualification which would have greatly enhanced their chances of obtaining a higher grade. Study leave was also seen as an issue, as academic staff were often given an allowance for scholarly leave which gave them the opportunity to study, this was very rarely afforded to the support staff. One respondent reported 'there is a policy in place for academic study leave but none for clerical. When I asked no response was received so I took annual leave' (Respondent 16).

Financial support for courses outside the institution was also patchy. Some reported that their department would fund external courses where others (sometimes within the same institution) reported that they had no chance of receiving financial support. There did not appear to be any central funding for the development of this category of staff to the knowledge of any of those interviewed or any central policies on staff development for clerical and administrative staff. One respondent reported a staff development budget of £3,000 per year for every two academic staff compared to £3,000 per year for forty-eight support staff. Staff development was generally left up to the individual to sort out with no institution offering a training pathway for career progression.

## **7.6 Opportunities for promotion**

Promotion for this group of staff is not based on individual contribution but on the needs of the workgroup (Eveline, 2004:153). This was certainly a bugbear of many respondents as 'every-one is lumped in together regardless of performance' (Respondent 80). It can therefore be very difficult to obtain promotion with some respondents reporting that their institution seemed to have a quota on the number of support staff regrades that are allowed within an academic year. Others reported that financial constraints also made it difficult to progress with interviewee 6 (team leader/UNISON officer) reporting that 'cash rich schools manage to promote their staff more quickly and in greater numbers'. Likewise, interviewee 17 reported similar difficulties as her department was Classics which was a small area which did not make much money. Therefore there was little opportunity for promotion purely on the grounds of financial constraints.

Equal opportunities policies have little impact on clerical posts as it is a gendered occupation and therefore not seen in competition with men (Wilkins, 1998:79). However, Interviewee 21 did report that she had commenced legal action at one point as it was believed she had been turned down for promotion because she was a woman but she eventually dropped her case as she felt threatened by senior management. Universities tended to dismiss the gender imbalance within administrative and clerical groups as indicative of the wider gender bias in society in relation to career choice and consequently did nothing to encourage change or widen opportunities and/or aspirations within the occupational group which is a clear example of inactivity supporting the status quo (Lukes, 2005:40).

Patchy support for the career development of clerical and administrative workers was evident within some institutions and interview evidence showed a lack of long-term planning which would be required to change the entrenched position of these staff. Interviewee 1 talked about a 'Springboard' programme that was available to all staff to help them develop their careers. However, after the member of staff who ran it left, the programme was dropped. This was followed some years later by a mentoring programme that mixed academics, managers and clerical and administrative staff into groups in order to provide mutual assistance and encouragement. This too was dropped following the departure of the member of staff who co-ordinated it in spite of many staff reporting that they found it helpful and inspiring. However, it would appear that the outcomes were not measured for either scheme, making it difficult to assess the effect, if any, of such initiatives and, without any long term commitment, discernible success is unlikely.

Managers sometimes blamed the staff themselves for their lack of progress. Interviewee 7 suggested that she had got ahead of others within her department as she was more

willing to take on tasks that they were not willing to do. Likewise, interviewee 22 could not see why staff did not 'just get on with it like I have. I started as a secretary and have worked my way up'. She also talked about staff who became very attached to their roles which tended to make them inflexible and unwilling to move on. Interviews conducted in Australia by Castleman and Allen (1995) also found a fairly widespread belief amongst university managers that many general staff were 'inflexible and wedded to their job' (Castleman and Allen (1995:68), However, although 66 per cent of respondents to the questionnaire did state that they did not plan to move out of their role their responses to other questions did not suggest that this was because of an unwillingness to take on new tasks but rather a symptom of organisational structures and biases that left the majority with no-where to go in terms of promotion. It is not, as commonly believed, that women simply do not aspire to higher paid jobs (Pollert, 1983:100; Cockburn, 1994:77).

Promotion opportunities were generally seen as limited and not always easy to come by. Interviewee 1 talked about being judged on characteristics that were not relevant for the job and gave the example of staff having to complete a presentation for a grade 5 job that did not require the postholder to give presentations. Interviewee 6 talked about the on-going battle as a union representative with the Human Resource Department to advertise roles without the requirement for four GCSEs as these could potentially disadvantage older but well experienced members of staff.

Opportunities for acting up and job rotation were also seen as increasingly limited. Interviewee 17 gave the example of maternity cover which, at one time, was a potential opportunity to cover work of a higher grade and thus obtain the requisite experience required for promotion. However, these opportunities were diminishing in the face of economic challenges and cutbacks. Interviewee 11 reported that the University had

mooted the prospect of job rotations on many occasions and this was generally met with enthusiasm by clerical staff who welcomed the opportunity to work in another department. However, in practise this never got off the ground and, in times of cutback and staff reductions, seemed even less likely that staff could be released to work in other departments.

Again, part-time staff fared even worse when it came to promotion opportunities. There seemed to be an in-built bias against the promotion of part-time workers and a perception across the sector that part-time jobs were of little worth. Interviewee 16 applied for a re-grade when she was working part-time and it was turned down. She then re-applied when full-time but doing the same job and it was successful. Interviewee 14 (administrative assistant) felt that since she had changed institutions and become a part-time worker her career prospects had gone downhill.

Both managers and employees who worked in smaller departments highlighted the added problems in obtaining re-gradings for staff. One interviewee reported:

'My School is very small the support staff team very tight. However, many of the requirements in terms of quality assurance, marketing and internal and external reporting are the same whether you have 60 or 600 students. Consequently my support staff seem to keep taking on more and more responsibilities. For example, the postgraduate administrator has taken over responsibly for marketing the postgrad courses and has been on a design course. The undergraduate administrator has taken a good proportion of admissions work from an academic. However, I can't get them rewarded for any of this as the support staff structure within such a small school is so flat and, although they both have a huge amount of responsibility and autonomy in

certain areas, neither controls financial resources or supervises staff which are the essential criteria needed for higher grades'. (Interviewee 8).

## **7.7 Working environment**

Questions on the working environment were met with a mixed response. 67.8 per cent of respondents reported that they worked in a supportive and friendly environment. However, 29.8 per cent disagreed with this statement and 58 per cent reported poor morale within their organisation. The major reasons cited for this low morale was cut-backs, job insecurity and redundancies, and poor management described by one respondent as 'a culture of worsening service but glossier brochures' (Respondent 231).

A particular issue that came out in the interviews was the tendency for universities to block replacement support staff posts. This was a source of frustration for both clerical and administrative staff and also for their line managers. An analysis of HESA statistics also seems to bear this out. The statistics for 2009/10 reported 410 less academic posts across the sector than for the previous year and 2500 less clerical, administrative and associated posts (HESA, 2012). This represents the loss of 6 clerical staff compared to every academic post lost. In 2007 before these job losses the 38 per cent of the questionnaire respondents reported that there were vacancies within their area of work with 18.4 per cent reporting that they some-times had to cover these vacancies and 11.7 per cent reporting they often covered vacancies. The Times Higher Education also reported a loss of support staff including 10.6 per cent fall in the number of clerical and related employees since 2009 (Times Higher Education, 2013:6). School managers reported difficulties replacing staff, and clerical staff reported increased and often unmanageable workloads as the pressure to provide a consumer driven 'student

experience' is coupled with, often severe, financial constraints. One respondent who was about to retire after twenty years' service summed the situation up thus:

'After twenty years in HE I have seen an overall decline across the board. Student behaviour is poorer which leaves me wondering if our young people are misusing further education; too few resources with universities fighting for funding and very low staff morale. If I did not love my job I would have left a long time ago as standards and treatment of HE staff has declined rapidly since the loss of grants to students and the restriction of funding.'" (Respondent 222).

Posts were also lost either directly or indirectly due to re-structuring. This was a theme that presented itself many times both in the responses to the questionnaires and in the interviews. In the age of new managerialism across the sector, senior managers appear increasingly keen on re-structuring and job descriptions for management posts frequently refer to 'managing the change agenda'.

Clerical and administrative staff often seemed to be the target for re-structuring and redundancy exercises. Some staff had been downgraded following re-structuring exercises and many had been left in the dark by senior managers as to what the support staff structure would be following re-structuring and how they would fit into it. Many had had to apply for positions within their existing area. Interviewee 1, a long serving member of staff, applied for three different positions during a re-structuring exercise until she was finally appointed at a grade lower than her existing one. She claimed that '...by this time I was grateful to have a job, whatever the grade, but I have been destroyed by this and will never have the confidence to apply for another job within the University'. Soon after she left the university sector. One questionnaire respondent reported 'I was made to apply for the job I had been doing for three years. I then had to sign a new contract with a lower

annual leave entitlement. I had no support from management'. Another had gone through a restructuring exercise twice in the past few years and 'due to circumstances beyond my control I have lost my position twice and am now on the redeployment register ' (Respondent 193). Another reported:

'I had to apply for my own job back after eighteen years. Many clerical staff did not obtain a new position within the re-structured school and have had to transfer to fixed term contracts, have been made redundant or will be re-deployed. No academic staff have had to do this and the number of managers stays the same: however, there are fifty per cent less clerical staff. Lives have been changed but not for the better'.

(Interviewee 29)

These re-structuring exercises often resulted in a worsening of pay and/or conditions with one respondent reporting she had moved twice in the past two months and had lost £4,000 per annum with a resultant down grading. Another respondent was asked to move to another site thirty miles away following a re-structuring which was not economically viable on a grade 4 salary.

However, in spite of increasing uncertainty across the sector, general staff often develop deep loyalties to their organisations (Eveline, 2004:153). This was also apparent in this study, many did mention the positive sides of working within higher education and there was clearly a lot of loyalty to both their jobs and their institutions. 58 per cent said they found their job challenging and rewarding and, in spite of periods of instability, re-organisation and job losses, 60 per cent still felt that their job was secure. However, 31 per cent did not feel secure and cited reasons of re-structuring and merging. Many reported several re-organisations over recent years along with reviews of administrative



services and threats of redundancies in light of an increasingly challenging education environment. One respondent commented that 'education institutions are now being run on business/corporate lines and education is secondary' (Respondent 562).

Most respondents however do intend to stay in their posts. 66 per cent planned to stay in their role for the foreseeable future with only 15 per cent planning to move out of higher education or to a completely different role. As the initial statistics showed, 47 per cent had worked at their institution for over eleven years. Many of those interviewed had long and varied careers within the sector and had no intention of moving to another employer in spite of grievances regarding management and promotion prospects. Of those who expressed a desire to move from their role lack of opportunities for progression was frequently cited as the reason. Many also stated that they felt undervalued and others cited boredom, insecurity or poor treatment from managers as reasons for wishing to leave. Others wished to leave because of job insecurity and many also cited the need for more money.

Although no specific questions were asked about possible age discrimination it was clear that some people felt this to be an issue. One respondent reported that 'older workers seem more expendable and less supported than younger workers' (Respondent 200) and another that 'roles are manipulated to favour younger women in my department' (Respondent 87).

## **7.8 Conclusion**

As a result of gender and class segregation, inequality regimes operate within the British higher education system to the disadvantage of the women within this research. These

are apparent in a number of areas. The class divide between academic and support staff reinforces the disadvantage that clerical and administrative staff experience within the sector by virtue of their gender. Described by Eveline as the 'iron curtain' (Eveline, 2004:138) this longstanding divide is perpetuated by divided workspace and a master-servant relationship where the work of clerical and administrative staff is not appropriately valued as a contribution to the university mission (Eveline, 2004:130). Lower level support staff as a whole are conspicuously absent from the decision making bodies within the University. For example, representatives from the academic and management community are elected members of Senate in all organisations but few have an administrative member of staff on their body. Clerical and administrative staff are therefore often the invisible workforce, a generally well qualified and usually very loyal workgroup who lack representation within their organisations.

Typical of organisations with established inequality regimes, universities offer little opportunities for many of the workgroup to progress through their organisation into higher level jobs. Universities lack the structures for, or the commitment to, challenge the status quo in this area and merely dismiss the high proportion of women in the clerical occupations as merely reflecting gender preference. However, what is generally ignored is the number of women stuck in the lower clerical grades. Many highly qualified and experienced staff are stuck at the bottom with no hope of progressing. Accusations from managers that this is a reflection of choice or lack of ambition was not backed up by the survey evidence which suggested a systematic under-investment and lack of interest in developing or encouraging these staff to progress.

UNISON has for many years shown a commitment to gender equality via self-organisation and the appointment of Regional Women's Officers. However, branch officers often found

themselves responding and reacting to day to day industrial relations problems with little or no time to promote equalities issues or to challenge the discriminatory structures inherent in many organisations. Instead they often found themselves fighting small battles for equality such as the right to flexible working or appeals against regrading decisions.

Acker identified that organisations are frequently based around the image of a white man, totally dedicated to work with no responsibilities for childcare or family demands (Acker, 2006:448b). This would seem to be the case in many higher education institutions where there were no opportunities for clerical staff to work flexibly. Consequently part-time work was the only opportunity available for many staff who wished to combine work and family commitments. In many cases this was found to carry double disadvantage in terms of lack of prospects and status.

Inequalities are not just visible in pay levels across organisations but across a whole range of terms and conditions. Disparities in terms and conditions of employment between clerical and administrative staff and other workgroups was also apparent and this too, reinforcing the disadvantage that the workforce has by virtue of their gender and class position within their organisations. These inequalities are legitimised by the institutions' organisational structures which are hierarchical and place predominantly female occupations at the bottom. Class and gender based hierarchies and inequalities frequently limit women's opportunities within the workplace. These limited opportunities to progress within or out of gender segregated groups ensures the maintenance of the gender hierarchies. This will be considered in the next Chapter which looks at pay and promotion for clerical and administrative staff.

## **Chapter 8: Pay structures and determination and perception of pay**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The previous two chapters looked at how inequality in terms and conditions of employment and under-valuation of skill affect the career opportunities of clerical and administrative staff. This chapter will examine how a combination of these factors conspires to deflate the pay of this group of staff. Background evidence will be used to examine salaries of administrative and clerical staff and how they compare to other categories of staff across the sector and also to similar jobs outside higher education. Interview and survey evidence will be presented which highlights the perceptions of the salary levels and the problems obtaining additional rewards.

The chapter will also consider how national and local pay bargaining impacts on this group of staff and will examine the promotions and rewards procedures that ensure that the salaries of the majority of this group of staff are kept relatively low. Comparisons will be made between male and female salaries and attempts will be made to explain these differences. The difficulties obtaining promotion was discussed in Chapter 7. This chapter will explore the issue in more depth and examine how these problems impact on the salaries of the staff.

### **8.2 Overview of administrative and clerical pay**

The HESA statistics for 2009-2010 show that the largest single group (44 per cent) of full-time clerical and administrative staff earn between £17,000 and £22,879 (HESA, 2010: Table C). Only 9 per cent of those on managerial, professional and technical grades earn between £17,111 and £22,879 and the lecturing salaries run from £30,122 to £55,908

(HESA, 2010: Table C). In 2010, the median wage in the UK for all jobs was £25,922 (Office for National Statistics, 2010). In this respect the pay of a large proportion of university clerical and administrative staff is below the national average and also considerably worse than a large number of their colleagues.

There is little doubt that the pay of clerical and administrative staff across the economy as a whole has been eroded over time. For example, the 2010 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings reported that the median gross earnings for administrative and administrative occupations was £381.90 per week (£19,858 per annum) (Office for National Statistics, 2010). The same survey reported a median gross wage of £458.40 per week (£23,836 per annum) for skilled trades and £425 per week (£22,100 per annum) for machine operators, which would generally be considered an unskilled trade. This clearly illustrates that the pattern of wage erosion for clerical workers identified by Klingender (1935); Crompton and Jones (1984) and Lockwood (1958) and discussed in Chapter 4 has been maintained into the Twenty-First Century. In spite of being traditionally identified as a middle class profession, clerical pay has suffered from gradual erosion since the mid 1930s (Routh, 1980:120). Lower pay levels in occupations that are predominantly female underpin the persistence of the gender pay gap which in 2010 was 15.5 per cent for hourly earnings, excluding overtime and 21.5 per cent for gross weekly earnings (Perfect, 2011:3). Certainly, this survey identified the difficulties for the staff group in obtaining decent pay rises and also a striking anomaly between the pay of the majority women and the minority men. There were also marked differences in the rates of pay for part-time staff when compared to full-time staff. Again, this is reflected across the UK economy as a whole: when part-time workers are taken into consideration, the gender pay gap increases to an hourly mean gap of 19.2 per cent and a weekly mean gap of 38.5 per cent (Perfect, 2011:6).

One of the few research papers on higher education that includes clerical and administrative staff found that the pay gap for administrative staff was nearly four times greater than that for teaching staff (Smith, 2009:622). Smith's study of two UK universities showed evidence that the gender pay gap increased with the proportion of female staff in each grade (ibid:627). Consequently, in one university the pay gap was as low at 4 per cent for technicians and as high as 22 per cent for administrative staff (ibid:627). Smith also found that the gap occurs at UK higher education institutions where there is a formal framework and scales that should ensure pay equality between men and women (ibid:622). Clearly however these formal frameworks have failed.

Prior to 2006 most universities had three or four separate pay spines and separate procedures for promotion from one grade to another. The introductory chapter gave an example of a typical university salary structure prior to 2006 (Chapter 1, page 9). It was clearly discriminatory as clerical and administrative staff salary spine had a lower starting and ending point than other categories of salaried staff. The introduction of the National Framework Agreement aimed to do away with this. The aim of this joint union and employer agreement was:

'to modernise pay arrangements in the sector to improve the recruitment and retention of staff, to ensure equal pay for work of equal value, to tackle problems of low pay, to recognise and reward the contribution which individuals make, and to underpin opportunities for career and organisational development' (Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff, 2003).

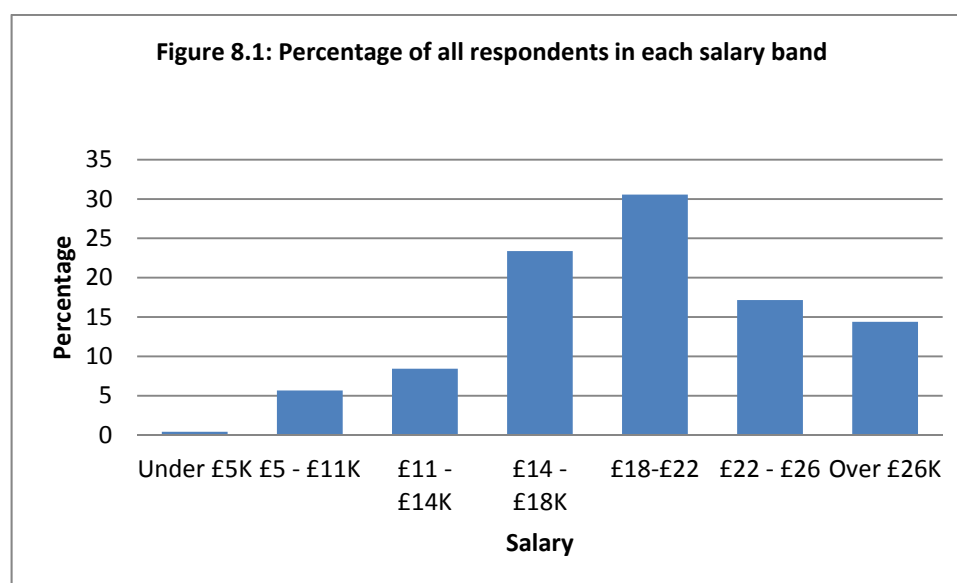
However, as the Framework progressed many did not feel that their pay had improved with some even reporting that they had become worse off. As described below by one interviewee:

“The National Framework Agreement was initially met with some excitement amongst the staff, especially us UNISON officers who had struggled for many years with an antiquated regrading system that was just no longer suited to the needs of the modern workforce. However, it’s all been a bit disappointing really. All the majority of universities seem to have done is amalgamate the three salary scales and slide people over to their nearest point. Consequently the new system just replicates the old one with a slight uplift for staff. It’s done nothing to address the anomalies of pay between technical staff and administrative and clerical staff and it seems to offer no additional opportunities for staff to progress”. (Interviewee 6)

Consequently, post 2006 the sector has one pay spine with individuals sitting in more or less the same place that they were before and with clerical and administrative staff quite often at or near the bottom. The limitation of the 2006 agreement was frequently mentioned by survey respondents who thought that the assimilation process favoured academic and other higher grade staff. Comments included: ‘academic staff can all expect a pay rise whereas many clerical staff have been downgraded’ (Respondent 3) and ‘the Framework was supposed to bring job equality. Instead it led to bad feeling and resentment. Only the dishonest did well’ (Respondent 102). Interviewee 15 claimed “HERA (Higher Education Roles Analysis) affected staff badly leading to low morale and many staff left.” Interviewee 16 claimed that her University used HERA to downgrade staff and if individuals did not accept the new structure, they were made redundant. However, others did acknowledge that it had dealt with ‘some inequalities in pay’ and the majority did see some gains from the National Framework and in the following four years negotiated pay rises helped to improve the salaries of all staff within the Sector. For example, a Grade 3 secretary on point 10 of the single pay spine earned £13,374 on 1st

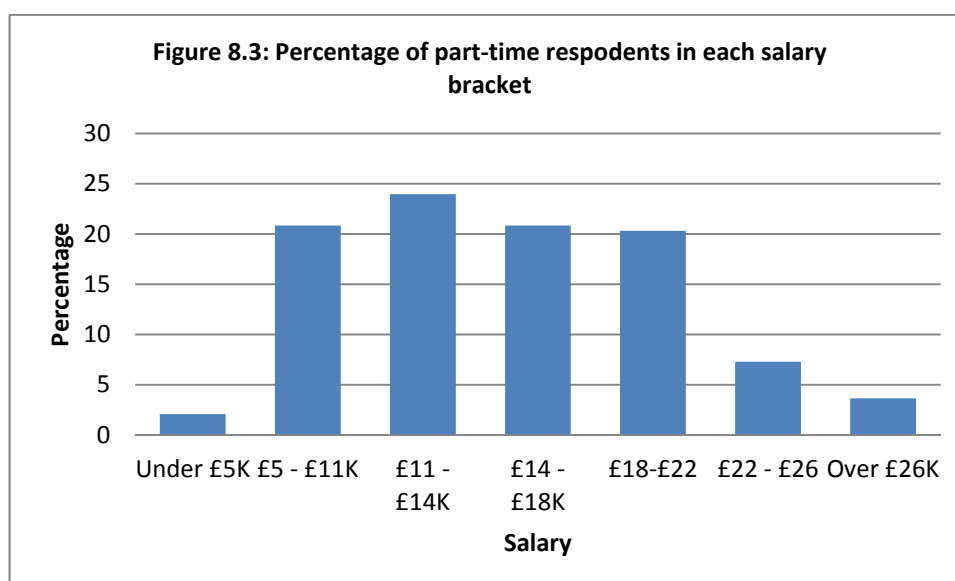
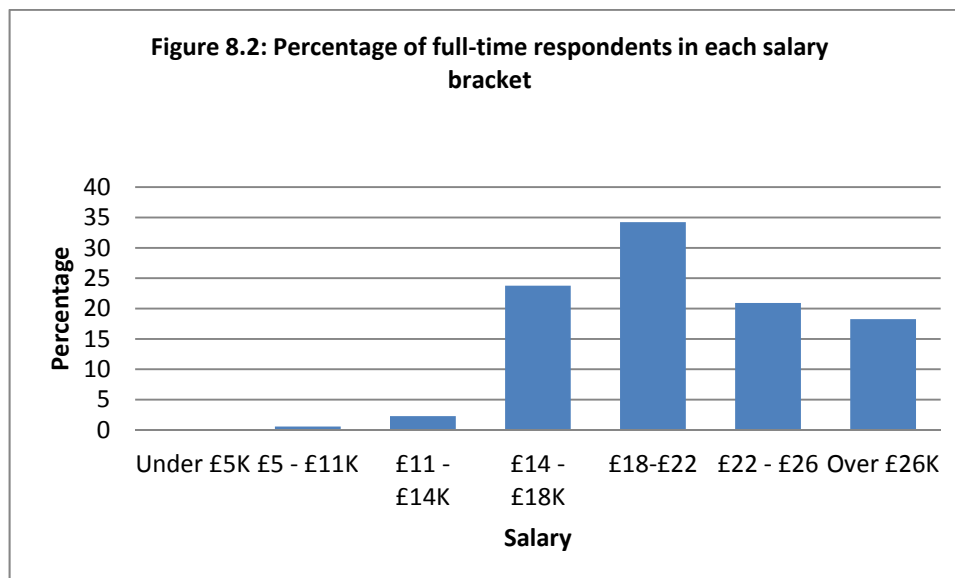
August 2003 (Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff, 2003). Following the Pay Framework negotiations and the negotiated pay rises this had risen to £16,547 by October 2008 (UCU, 2012). This represents an increase of 19 per cent over the 5 year period. However, these gains were short lived and by August 2011 the salary rises had slowed to well below inflation and the annual salary for a secretary on point 10 of the pay spine was £16,846, an increase of just 1.8 per cent over three years. Although these small rises obviously affect everyone across the sector it was felt very keenly by those on the lower end of the pay spine who were struggling to manage on their salaries when rises were good. For those working their way up from the lower points of a grade there was little gain each year. For example, for a Grade 8 academic or management grade one incremental point gives a pay rise of between £1,100 and £1,320. For a grade four secretary the rises are between £352 and £418 (University Pay Spine, 2011).

In the absence of any detailed national salary information, the survey asked respondents to provide salary details within broad categories and the graphs below shows the salaries of all the respondents in each of the salary brackets:





These results are very similar to the national picture with the largest single group (41.5 per cent) earning between £14,000 and £22,000. Only 31 per cent fall into the highest two salary brackets with only 14 per cent earning over £26,000.



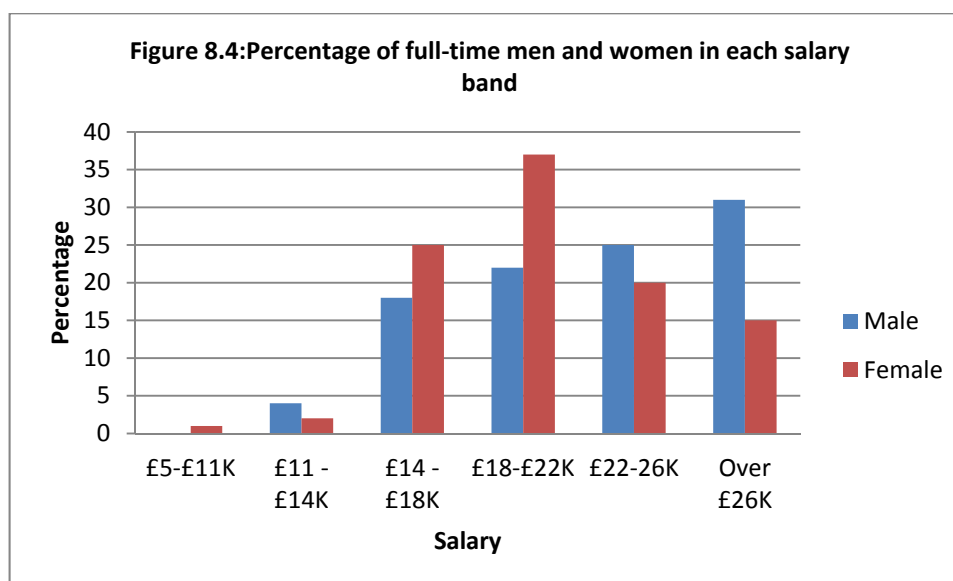
However when full and part-time respondents are considered separately a different picture emerges. Only 31.5 per cent of part-time workers fell into the highest three pay bands compared to 73 per cent of full-time workers and 39 per cent of full-time workers fell into the top two bands compared with 11 per cent of part-time workers. This confirms that the pay gap for part-time workers in this study, as in the wider economy, significant. Only six

of the respondents who worked part-time were male so this clearly affects a disproportionate amount of female workers and confirms evidence presented in the previous two chapters which, in part, concluded that part-time workers were particularly disadvantaged in terms of opportunities to progress and in obtaining recognition for their skills. This is significant as part-time workers constituted over one quarter of this sample and are present in increasing numbers across higher education and the economy as a whole.

There is also a striking difference between male and female respondents' remuneration and there are also differences depending on the type of institution worked in, domestic responsibilities, age and qualifications. These will be examined individually below.

### 8.3 Pay and gender

The graph below shows how the number of full-time males increases as the salary bands increase:

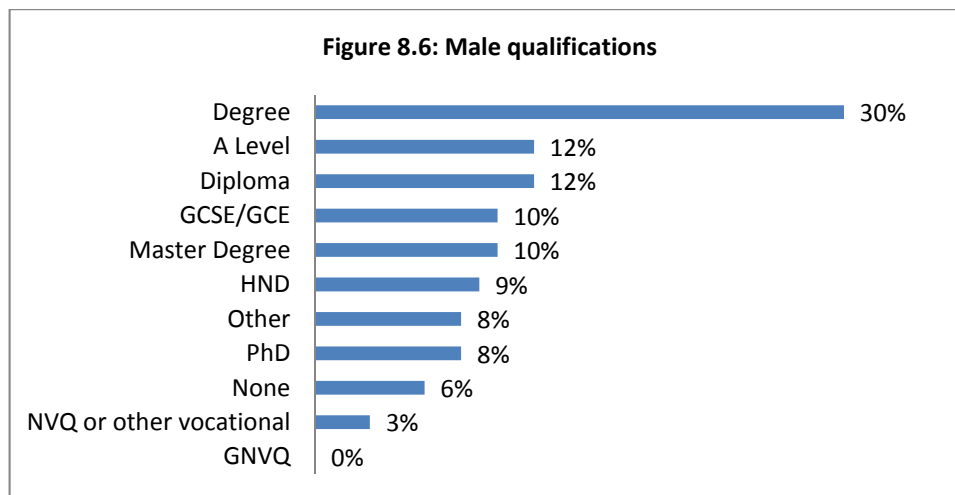
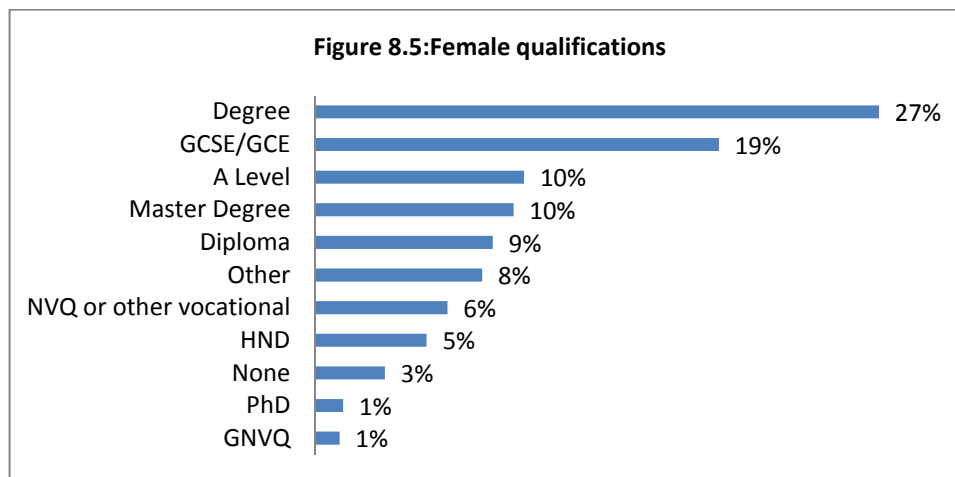


Although the numbers of men in the survey are relatively small, it can clearly be seen that their chances of earning a higher salary are considerably higher. 56 per cent of full-time male workers were in the top two salary brackets compared to 35 per cent of women. Only 15 per cent of full-time female workers earned over £26,000 compared to 31 per cent of full-time male workers. Even though there are only eight part-time male workers (1 per cent of the overall sample) gender salary disparities are still apparent with women clustered at the bottom with men completely absent in the lowest two grades and present in greater numbers in the top two grades.

The length of service of male and female respondents was then compared to see if men in the higher salary brackets were there because of longer service records. This was found not to be the case. The only significant difference was in the highest salary bracket where 7 per cent of men with less than one year's service were found compared to only 2.8 per cent of women with less than a year's service. This suggests that men are slightly more likely to be appointed to higher salaries than women. Generally there were virtually no differences between the men and women in terms of salary and length of service. It could therefore be concluded that men do not earn more because they have a longer service record.

When comparing salary to qualification levels it can be seen that those with higher qualifications tend to attract the higher salaries. With the exception of GCSE/GCE qualifications, which showed a slight variation from the other qualifications, the graph below shows a clear increase in the percentage of respondents in the highest three salary brackets (i.e. from £18,001 to £26,000 plus) as the level of qualification increases. 70 per cent of those with degrees were grouped in the three highest salary bands and 78 per cent of those with masters degrees also fell into the top three bands, with 40 per cent

earning £26,000 and over. When this information was broken down into gender the following pattern emerged:



As the biggest salary differences by gender were in the two highest salary brackets, these were then analysed further. When this data is broken down by gender it is apparent that although there are slight variations, for example 34 per cent of men earning over £26,000 were educated to degree level compared to 30 per cent of women, these variations are not significant enough to suggest that male earnings are generally higher because the men are more highly qualified.

Additionally, no male graduates earned less than £14,001 whereas 9 per cent of female graduates did. In other respects there were few differences in the middle salary brackets between men and women, again the anomalies were most apparent at the bottom of the salary range and at the top.

#### **8.4 Pay and age**

Although the statistics from the survey showed little distinction in salary according to age, it was clear that older respondents felt that their chances of progression and promotion were very limited. Many comments from survey respondents referred to being overlooked for promotion by newer, more highly qualified staff. One respondent reported that she felt discriminated against because she was in her 50s as all posts are filled by 20 year olds. Amongst interviewees, older members of staff seemed to be more resigned to the limited opportunities and more accepting of the salary levels than their younger counterparts. Only 8 per cent of those over 51 reported that they often or very often had problems managing on their salary compared to 16 per cent of those aged 21 to 40 years. However, 14 per cent of those aged 30 years and under thought the pay of clerical and administrative staff was fair compared to twenty-two per cent of those aged 51 and over. However, this may well not be because of lack of ambition but rather years of knockbacks and lack of opportunities have led to a general acceptance of the situation as reported below:

“Perhaps I should have pushed more when I was younger but it was hard work and there were always so few opportunities and anyway, I do like working here so the salary limitations aren’t too bad.” (Interviewee 4)

Younger respondents and interviewees were not as accepting of the salaries as the older members of staff and were more likely to have plans to move on if they did not progress. Only 32 per cent of those aged 21 to 30 years were planning to stay in their current role for the foreseeable future compared to 72 per cent of those between 51 and 60 years and 77 per cent of those aged 61 or over. When asked why they are planning on moving out of the current role, all respondents bar the over 61s who almost without exception mentioned retirement, mentioned pay and promotion problems with their current role. However, this was particularly prevalent in the 21 to 30 year age group who frequently mentioned the need to progress within their career and the need for greater earning potential. This was re-iterated in the interviews, as a part-time worker reported:

“As soon as the children are older I want another better paid job. It’s not worth working full-time while they are so young as the childcare costs would out-weigh the benefits. However, I don’t want to plod on here forever on a clerical and administrative grade so will be definitely moving on in the next few years.”

(Interviewee 9)

Interviews with staff in their 50s who had worked in the sector for many years showed a different employment practice when children had meant leaving work temporarily (Interviewee 5) or temporarily working part-time (Interviewee 6) and then returning to a similar role and grade. The expectations of the younger staff certainly seem to exceed those of the older ones as they have grown up with more opportunities for women within the workplace as women are now entering occupations or industries from which they were previously under represented such as management and the professions (Connolly and Gregory, 2007:142).

## **8.5 Pay and Types of organisation**

Salary levels are also affected by the type of organisation the respondent works at. Although the highest proportion of respondents (47%) worked at Pre-1992 Universities, the majority of those who earned over £26,000 worked at Post-1992 Universities. Only 9 per cent of those in pre 1992 organisations earned over £26,000 compared to 21.9 per cent of those who worked at ex polytechnics and 10.6 per cent of those working at ex higher education colleges. The percentage of staff in the lower grades however did not differ widely across the different types of institutions. 12.2 per cent of those working in pre 1992 institutions earned less than £14,001 compared to 16.1 per cent in ex polytechnics and 16.6 per cent in ex higher education colleges. .

When looking at the gender split between pre and post 1992 universities it was clear that men were more likely to work in the post 1992s. 61.6 per cent of men compared to 46.8 per cent of women worked in ex polytechnics or higher education colleges. As the higher salaries are more likely to be in the newer universities this may offer some explanation as to why men are more likely to be in the higher pay bands but it opens up further questions as to why men are more likely to work in clerical and administrative bands in post 1992s that were not addressed within this research.

## **8.6 Pay and Domestic Situation**

The sample followed the traditional pattern of male/female earnings in relation to domestic situation. Across the whole sample, and of those that responded to this question, 25 per cent were the sole earner, 22.8 per cent the main earner and 49.2% the secondary

earner. However, when analysed by gender and working hours the results were quite different, especially for part-time workers, as shown below:

**Figure 8.7: Household situation by gender**

Household Situation	Total Sample	Male Respondents	Female Respondents
Sole earner	25%	35%	24%
Main earner	23%	29%	21%
Secondary earner	50%	25%	54%
Other (joint earner)	2%	1%	1%

**Figure 8.8: Household situation by working hours**

Household Situation	Total Sample	Full-time	Part-time
Sole earner	25%	30%	12%
Main earner	23%	28%	10%
Secondary earner	50%	40%	76%
Other (joint earner)	2%	2%	2%

These results clearly show a traditional pattern of earnings with more men than women claiming to be the sole or main earner and more women listed as secondary earner. Siltanen (1994) distinguishes the labour market between full and component wage jobs in relation to pay and household maintenance that individuals are able to sustain given the wages earned in the job (Siltanen, 1994:77). Clearly a majority of the female sample in this group earn 'component' wages which make a contribution to the household but would be unable independently sustain a household.

However, the model was also far from universal and this was especially apparent from the interviews. Interviewees who had risen from administrative and clerical grades to higher management level grades had, without exception, continued to work full-time even when



their children were pre-school age. Interviewees 2, 7, 8 and 24, all School Managers, had started their careers on low grade clerical jobs but had always worked full-time, returning to work after maternity leave. Two of these three were the sole or major earner in the family and cited economic reasons for their rapid return to full-time work. However, one interviewee also conceded that she believed her commitment to full-time work throughout her working life was the sole reason that she had been able to rise from a grade one to a grade eight within a relatively short period of time:

“If I had gone part-time like a lot do after my daughter was born I would have missed out on so many opportunities. I really don’t think I’d have got beyond a grade 4 at such a relatively young age as the opportunities aren’t there for part-timers. I see a lot of colleagues who’ve worked part-time for a number of years and when they are ready for full-time work the opportunities seem to have been lost and they get stuck at a certain grade.” (Interviewee 24).

Interviewees 5 and 6 had both worked part-time while their children were young and felt that this had affected their earnings potential as ‘I think there is still an attitude that if you don’t come back to work full-time after your maternity leave then you aren’t really committed to a career with the university and are happy to stay in a clerical role’ (Respondent 77). One survey respondent noted that she thought the sector was divided into middle-aged part-time workers with childcare or other responsibilities and younger well qualified staff who are able to work full-time (Respondent 107).

## 8.7 Pay determination

Pay across higher education is still subject to collective bargaining and is negotiated nationally by Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education (JNCHES). This includes representatives from the employers and also from a number of unions, UCU, Unite, UNISON and the GMB. All three unions negotiate for an annual uplift in salary from 1st August across all points of the common pay spine and also on pay and equality related issues. As discussed in Chapter Four clerical and administrative staff were slow to achieve trade union recognition and were the last of the public sector trade unions to be included in collective bargaining arrangements and there is some evidence to suggest that they have trailed behind, never quite gaining a voice in the national arena.

The 2012 pay claim asked for an increase of 3.7% on all salary point with an additional 3.3 per cent to catch up with the real terms pay cut over the previous three years; a commitment from all universities to pay a 'Living Wage'; for positive action on the gender pay gap; assimilation of hourly paid staff to the national pay spine and a joint agreement on disability leave (JNCHES, March 2012). However, the action on the gender pay gap refers to professorial and senior staff only. The 'Living Wage' commitment would only benefit a very small number of clerical and administrative staff whose minimum salary is currently £13,353 per annum (whereas the minimum Living Wage would work out to be £13,572). Although both these requests are extremely important, neither of them would benefit those on administrative and clerical contracts who feel that they are rarely considered in the national bargaining process. 50 per cent of those who responded to the question 'What are the priorities for UNISON?' selected the improvement of pay levels which was the most cited response. Likewise, when interviewees were asked what they would change about their employment if they could change one thing, many stated better

pay or better prospects for increasing their pay in the future. Clearly, pay is an important issue within the staff group but one that they feel is neglected by managers and employers.

## **8.8 Local pay awards and promotions**

At a local level individuals are appointed to a pre-determined grade in which they progress annually until they reach the top. The current recommended salary scale is included in Appendix J. On the 2011 pay spine these annual increments ranged from £349 at the bottom to £1,577 at the top. When an individual reaches the top of the scale they have to make a case for exceptionality in order to progress to the first point of the next grade, called the discretionary point. Once this point is reached there is no further scope for progression unless the job is regraded or the individual leaves for another post. The issue of grading and regrading was the most frequently talked about issue in both the surveys and the interviews.

The over-whelming view of the survey respondents and the interviewees was that it was very difficult for clerical and administrative staff to obtain promotion. 46 per cent of all respondents thought that it was easier for academic and academic related staff to obtain promotion and 25 per cent thought it was easier for technicians. Only 13 per cent thought that male clerical workers found it easier to be promoted. The problems that many of the respondents had obtaining monetary recognition for additional duties clearly constrains the whole workgroup to lower pay levels than their jobs often warrant. Many also expressed their disappointment when, on being awarded an additional increment or discretionary point for exceptional work, this meant an increase in salary of only a few hundred pounds before tax. The effort of putting the case together was often seen as not

worth the financial reward. Many also reported low success rates with such applications and some saw this as a disincentive to take on additional work. One person commented 'you get paid the same regardless of the amount of work you do. Your pay only goes up if they consider that you are working above your grade and this rarely happens' (interviewee 23).

Managers also reported difficulties in rewarding staff financially for exceptional work or taking on additional duties. The process of applying for ex-gratia payments or additional increments/discretionary points was generally seen as cumbersome and unnecessarily bureaucratic, especially considering the small amounts involved. The process of applying for an ex-gratia payment as small as £250 often involved the line manager writing a case which had to be supported by a Senior Manager, such as a Dean or Director and then submitted to a panel for consideration. If the award was turned down there was often no feedback given, with a number of clerical staff receiving letters which stated that the university recognised their exceptional performance but had not got sufficient funds to reward them financially.

On interviewee explained how her university's procedures for additional rewards included the express instruction not to tell the member about the application:

"The procedure for additional increments states that support staff should not be told about the application to avoid disappointment. It obviously doesn't say this in the academic procedures, in fact this procedure states that the head of school would need to liaise with the academic to get a full picture of what they do. I really object to this as it implies that the support staff aren't capable of contributing to their own

application and also treats them in a rather child-like manner – it reminds me of children getting a surprise Christmas present.” (Interviewee 8)

Likewise, one school manager reported:

“Quite often a member of staff will ask if there is chance for them to be submitted for an additional payment. What am I supposed to do – crush them with a no answer and lose their good will and then stick the application in behind their back. The application process only happens once a year and takes ages – how demotivated would the person be through this time if I’d said no and I how patronising if was then successful for me to then have to go to the person and say ‘surprise! I lied about putting you in for an extra payment as I didn’t want you to be disappointed’. If they don’t get the increment I would still look bad as it looks like I haven’t tried for them. It’s very silly and wouldn’t happen to people in higher grades” (Interviewee 24).

One interviewee spoke about how her university had changed the process so that members of staff could not put themselves forward:

“We have had a number of cases over the years where line managers haven’t put any-one forward to promotions or increments and blatantly refuse to do so but there was always the option of self-nomination. This has been taken away in spite of UNISON protesting so basically now if you get a spiteful manager or one of those who likes to make out they do everything for the department and everyone else is useless (and there are some of them) the staff don’t get the chance to raise their case externally at all.” (Interviewee 23)

Another gave a clear example of how an unsupportive manager could scupper an individual's chance of reward:

"I've taken on quite a bit more since I took this job on but I know that PAs don't get promoted above a grade five so I decided to try for an additional increment. I asked the Dean as I knew my line manager wouldn't help me. He agreed to support it but told me to give the case to my line manager to comment on and improve. I did this and he gave it back to me without any change, saying it was fine. I was then turned down to which my line manager said he wasn't surprised as it wasn't a very good case anyway". (Interviewee 4)

The questionnaire asked a number of questions relating to promotion and career progression including questions on promotion, appraisals and opportunities to discuss career development. This theme was also developed in the interviews.

This was a topic that respondents felt very strongly about and there were many comments on promotions both in the section on conditions of employment and also in the section specifically on promotions. Although 64.5 per cent thought that they were set clear goals and knew what was expected of them only 42.8 per cent reported that they had opportunities to discuss their career progression and 43 per cent disagreed with the statement 'my University has a good pro-active appraisal system for clerical staff'. Comments made in the survey around the appraisal system included: 'our annual appraisal is a rather useless, paper exercise that never leads to any-thing' (Respondent 9); 'My university doesn't bother with them for support staff' (Respondent 49) and 'the outcome depends on how good your manager is and mine isn't really interested in

promoting clerical staff' (Respondent 600). One interviewee, a school manager, talked about the difficulties with appraisal from a management point of view:

“My University’s policies are a bit contradictory as on the one hand they say that you should use the annual appraisal to inform the consideration of additional increments and then on the next line it says the member of staff shouldn’t be told they are been put forward for a reward making it a bit difficult to discuss an additional payment at the appraisal. Also, cutbacks make it difficult to offer anything at appraisal other than thanks for the effort. I know that at the academic staff appraisals the head of school will give advice on what individuals need to do to get to the next grade but I’m told support staff can’t grow their jobs so the appraisal process for the clerical staff basically has no outcomes. No wonder they aren’t keen on attending”. (Interviewee 8)

When asked about promotion, 67 per cent of the whole sample reported that they had applied for a promotion or regrading since working in Higher Education. 65 per cent of these applications were successful. However, 43 per cent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied by the process compared to 33 per cent who found it satisfactory.

Some referred to the glass ceiling and described it as being very low for clerical and administrative staff. Comments included: ‘There is no career development. After a maximum of one or two upgrades you hit a glass ceiling and get stuck there. There is no career path’ (Interviewee 21). 53 per cent said they did not have regular opportunities to discuss their career progression. There was little difference between male and female respondents with 55.6 per cent of men and 51.5 per cent of women either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement ‘I have regular opportunities to discuss my career progression’. There was also little difference between full and part-time workers with 52

per cent in both categories stating they had did not have regular opportunities to discuss their career development. Additionally, less than half the sample (48 per cent) thought that their institution had a proactive appraisal scheme.

Many suggested that 'nothing' existed in the way of promotion for clerical staff and this was seen as an issue by both the male and female respondents. No-one reported that their university had a specified career path for this category of staff, everywhere the chances of clerical and administrative staff seemed very much dependent on the organisation or even on the specific department or manager. The type of promotions schemes available varied considerably although there was some standardisation under the National Framework Agreement with Universities using either the HAY or HERA job evaluation schemes to determine the grade of the roles. Promotion was either obtained by applying for a regrade of the existing job or applying for a new, higher graded jobs. Frequently these higher grade jobs were advertised externally as well as within the institution and many found they lost out to an external applicant. Numerous comments centred around the lack of incentive within the system to encourage career development and that there was no recognition of experience. Many claimed that it was 'impossible' to be upgraded in an administrative job even if the duties have evolved considerably, in contrast to academic staff who 'can work their way up just by being in the same job for a while' (Interviewee 16). Many who had reached the top of their grade saw no hope of any further progression and with the possibility of transferring to an academic related grade either by regrading or applying for another job a virtual impossibility. Some University's had paper-based regrading/promotion schemes for clerical and administrative staff whereas others based the procedure around an interview. For a number of staff there was no longer an option to apply for regrading, only new posts at higher levels.



Many were put off by their university's regrading process, finding it 'hard work and long winded'; described by one interviewee thus:

'there is a nine page application form for a regrading in which many questions are worded in a similar manner. It is difficult to come up with new ways of answering the same questions'. (Interviewee 21)

Others reported onerous and off putting procedures including 'too many layers- line manager, Head of School, HR and a panel of interviewers (usually professors).' Another reported 'promotions are based on interviews alone and I am not good at interviews. I lack the confidence although I know I have the ability' (Interviewee 30). Other cited lack of transparency in the regrading procedures with 'people who know nothing about your job make decisions on your promotion' (Respondent 93). 'Promotions procedures are often daunting for clerical staff. It is often seen as senior members of staff frowning on your application. I'm sure many think it is not worth applying' (Interviewee 6). Managers were often unsupportive of staff when it came to applying for a re-grade. One survey respondent claimed 'we are told that no administrative staff will get re-graded so it's not worth trying for it' (Respondent 88).

"Promotion depends on how pro-active your manager is. There are not clear career paths and no clear promotions procedures unlike academic staff who have regular promotions rounds with deadlines that are adhered to." (Interviewee 15)

Managers themselves also expressed frustration at the difficulties in obtaining promotions for the clerical and administrative staff:

“There are no budgetary constraints on academic staff promotions and no academic ‘structure’ that needs to be adhered to – it’s all merit based. In my School we have a top heavy academic structure with many senior lecturers and professors which costs a fortune. I’m then told that I can’t replace support staff or I can’t regrade them as the salary bill is too high or my structure doesn’t allow a higher grade. Consequently I lose good staff as they move elsewhere for more money.” (Interviewee 2)

The issue of perceived inequalities between administrative and academic staff in terms of promotion prospects was also raised:

“Secretaries have no way of being promoted but it seems that higher academic grades keep increasing.” (Interviewee 5)

Interviewee 6 reported that she had noted, both in her role as a Trade Union Officer and also as a long-standing staff member, that ‘cash rich schools promote more quickly and have a larger number of higher grades’. Interviewee 17 reported that ‘balance sheets are more important than staff, especially when it comes to the lower grade staff.’ There was definitely a strong view amongst both survey respondents and interviewees that promotion procedures for clerical and administrative staff were largely dependent on the cash resources available and not on a fair and equitable assessment of an individual’s workload and level of responsibility. Interviewee 1 reported that “the glass ceiling has lowered making it impossible to move from a administrative post to a higher level even with a degree”.

Many universities who previously allowed staff to apply to have their posts re-graded are not now doing so and some have clearly stated that clerical and administrative staff can

no longer 'grow their own jobs'. Consequently there was no recognition for additional tasks taken on over and above the job description. This was a problem for both the staff carrying out the roles who frequently found themselves taking on additional duties and responsibilities for which they were not paid and also for their line managers who felt that could not ask their staff to take on more responsibilities when there was no chance of the duties been acknowledged and rewarded. One interviewee reported that

'This severely constricts any chance I have of developing the staff as all I can offer them no formal recognition. This is particularly difficult at a time when we are being asked to save money. When staff leave at least part of their duties often need to be re-distributed and there is only so much you can expect people to take on without financial reward'. (Interviewee 8)

This view was re-iterated many times:

"The attitude is, you are employed to do this and it's not the problem of the university if you choose to do more. Of course, this is just an excuse to get more out of individuals without paying them for it." (Interviewee 25)

Generic job descriptions easily allowed for additional duties to be slipped in over time without the consequent recognition or reward and there were a number of comments that referred to 'broad job descriptions that don't account for all duties.'

Again, part-time staff raised some specific issues, mainly the lack of higher grade jobs available on a part-time basis with 'job shares not as accessible as recruitment processes would suggest' (Interviewee 12). Part-time staff were also concerned that if they applied

for promotion they find it harder to combine work and family commitments. Part-time staff were slightly less likely to apply for a promotion or regrading. 60 per cent said they had applied compared to 70 per cent of full-time staff and, of these, 61 per cent were successful compared to a 67 per cent for full-time staff. One part-time worker reported that:

“Part-time staff just don’t get regraded. I can’t think of a single instance where this has happened. In order to stand a chance you would first have to apply for a full-time job or have your hours increased and, as a carer, that’s not possible for me at the moment. By the time I could go full-time I wonder if the opportunity will be there and whether I’ll be so typecast in what’s effectively a junior secretary role that I won’t get anywhere anyway.” (Interviewee 19)

Many part-time staff felt that they were unable to combine the flexibility of part-time work with a career. One respondent reported that ‘I would like a more challenging role but want to remain part-time. I would have to go full-time and lose the flexibility I have so I stay where I am’. Part-time staff also cited lack of opportunities for part-time regrades and the unrealistic expectations that made higher grade roles incompatible with part-time working. One part-time worker was concerned that if she did apply to have her job regraded her department would expect her to take on even more duties:

“I’m struggling at the moment to fit my work into my contracted hours and often have to work additional hours which I struggle to take back. However, at the moment there are certain things that I’m not asked to do, like Open Days, because I am part-time and a low grade. I’m sure that if my grade was increased this would change and I would struggle even more to finish on time for the school run.” (Interviewee 26)

Interviewee 26 reported that “no posts above a grade four are advertised on a part-time basis so you have a choice – go full-time and pay additional childcare costs or remain at the bottom of the heap.”

Increasingly managerialism and more rigid hierarchical structures within the sector were seen as a hindrance to career development. Staff found themselves losing higher grade work to ‘new management grades that have squeezed in above me’ thus further reducing the chance for promotion. ‘New managerialism’ has been an increasing feature within the sector since the late 1990’s and a number of interviewees remarked on this changing culture that has permeated throughout organisations from senior management to school and department level. Traditionally universities were perceived as collegiate communities of scholars and those running of universities were regarded as academic leaders rather than as managers or chief executives (Deem, 1998:47). The increased hierarchies that have resulted from these new approaches to management were seen by some respondents as an area that should have been addressed within the questionnaire as it was felt that these changes impinged on administrative and clerical staff as much as anyone else.

As previously reported 67 per cent of the whole sample had applied for a promotion, 69 per cent of men and 66 per cent of women. 59 per cent of men and 65 per cent of women stated that their promotion was successful. As men are generally paid more than women this would suggest that they are more likely to be appointed to higher salaries than obtain them via the promotions procedure. When citing reasons for not applying for promotion twice as many women (7.5 per cent) as men (3 per cent) cited ‘I do not have the confidence.’ This fits with the findings of Doherty and Manfredi whose study on

women's progress to senior positions within Universities found that 'women, both those in academic and support roles, were reticent to put themselves forward for promotion and also that they were likely to undervalue their achievements' (Doherty and Manfredi, 2006:567). In many cases this was due to lack of confidence about their ability to progress. Some women also reported that they were likely not to apply due to domestic commitments which they felt would be incompatible with increased responsibilities or because they were 'happy in their role'.

Another problem that was raised, particularly within the interviews, was the increasing tendency for universities to ask staff to apply for their own job. These instances usually fell into two categories. The first is when a member of staff leaves and someone is asked to cover the job, frequently for some-time and without any additional pay. Then the job is advertised and given to another person, as one respondent reported 'I was not given the job which I had been doing anyway and then had to train the person who was appointed'.

## **8.9 Perceptions of pay**

The previous section talked about the difficulties obtaining regradings and recognition for the work done by clerical and administrative staff. This section will look at the perceptions of the workgroup on their pay.

The questionnaire explored this by asking whether the respondents believed they were paid fairly when compared to other categories of staff within higher education. Questions were also asked as to why the respondents thought that the pay for clerical and administrative staff was generally lower than many other occupations. Analysis of the questionnaire results showed that 61.3 per cent felt that the pay for administrative and

clerical staff across the sector was unfair. 58.6 per cent of men believed the pay to be unfair compared to 60.6 per cent of women. Respondents were then asked about their opinion of why the pay was unfair. The breakdown of responses is shown below:

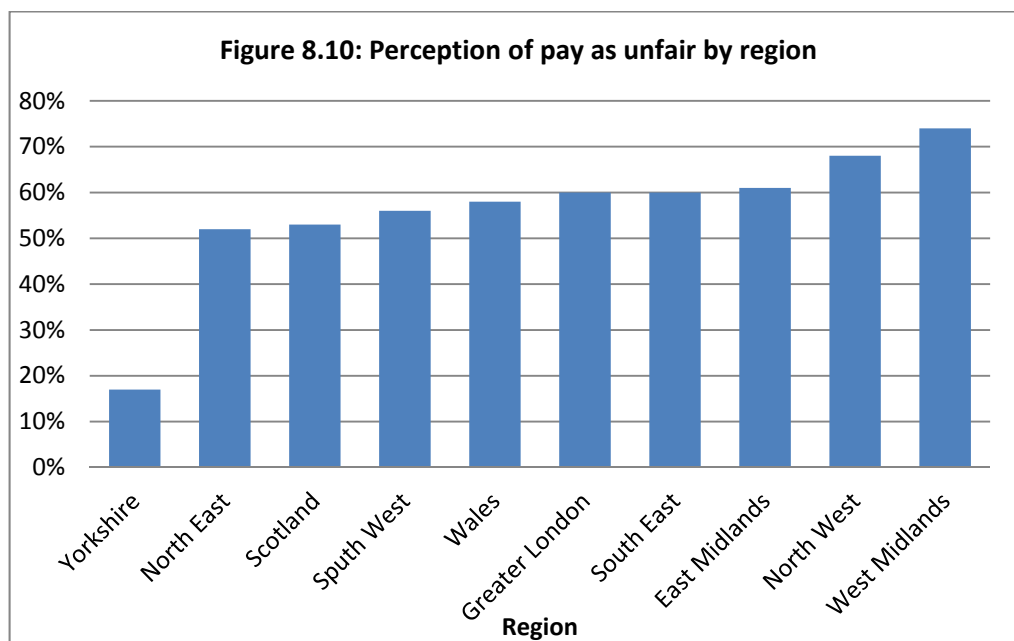
**Table 8.9: Why is clerical work unfairly paid (multiple answers possible)**

	Total Respondents (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Clerical work is traditionally a low paid occupation	36.8	36.4	36.7
Female skill, such as administrative skills, are undervalued by employers	28.1	17.2	30.1
Clerical workers are exploited by their employers because they are predominately female	22.5	25.3	22
Clerical work is seen as a working class occupation	16.9	13.1	17.8
Clerical workers are exploited by their employers regardless of their gender	10.4	7.1	10.7
The trade unions that represent clerical workers are weaker than other trade unions	10.2	13.1	9.8
Other	10.1	9.1	10.3
Clerical work does not require a high level of skill or qualification	4.2	6.1	3.8

The majority of the comments around the inequalities of pay referred to the undervaluation of skill and the perception that clerical work is a job ‘anyone can do’ as discussed in Chapter 6 and also of the general negative attitude to clerical work as discussed in Chapter 7. Some did not think that UNISON negotiated sufficiently well for clerical and administrative pay although 63 per cent of the sample thought that UNISON did this well. Those that expressed dissatisfaction thought that the national bargaining arena was dominated by the academic unions and some thought that UNISON was more concerned with the manual members within Higher Education.

### 8.9(i) Perceptions of pay by region

Initially, there did not appear to be any major differences between the different geographical regions. The graph below shows the percentage of those from each region who thought that they were paid unfairly compared to other categories of staff:



In most regions majority of respondents did not feel their pay was fair with the exception of Yorkshire where only 17 per cent agreed that the pay was unfair. However, this figure is skewed by small number of responses that listed Yorkshire as their geographical area. It should also be noted that this question asked respondents to comment on pay levels in relation to other categories of university staff and not on the pay levels in general and there were some comments around pay relating to the area of the respondents. For example, comments were made around the lower than average salaries in the South West affecting pay and interviewees whose institutions were in low wage areas did point out that although their salaries were below the national average they were better than many clerical jobs advertised in the region. There are quite considerable differences in salaries across the United Kingdom. For example, in 2009 the average salary in London was



£25,000 whereas the average salary in the North East was £17,000 (<http://www.salarytrack.co.uk>) and the location of the institution did have an effect on interviewees perceptions of pay. One interviewee who worked in a low-paid, high unemployment area conceded that, although she would like more money, at the moment there would be little chance of equalling her pay in the local economy:

“At one time we had a lot of big multinational employers and nationalised industries that paid as well, if not better, for clerical staff. Now, even the local council and hospital which were always big employers, are getting rid of staff. People are clamouring to work here as it is safer and better paid compared to the small private sector round here.” (Interviewee 5)

Interviewees who worked in the Midlands and the North of England and who had responsibility for staff recruitment noted that even the lowest grade jobs were attracting a high number of applicants with an increasing number having previously been employed on considerably higher salaries.

“A number of years ago I received three applications for a part-time job that was advertised in the local paper. More recently I’ve received over thirty for a similar temporary role. Many who applied were in permanent positions but were willing to take the risk of moving to a temporary role as the university is seen as a secure employee that pays well compared to many jobs around here and they just wanted to get their foot in the door.” (Interviewee 8).

## 8.10 Additional hours and duties

Clerical and administrative staff often find themselves taking on additional duties and/or working additional hours without any additional pay. The majority of respondents to the survey worked additional hours. 82.4 per cent worked between one and ten hours over their contracted hours most weeks. Of these only 13 per cent reported that they were paid for these hours with 60 per cent saying they were allowed to take time in lieu and 27 per cent reporting they received no reward at all. Additionally 80 per cent reported that they regularly worked beyond their job description with 40 per cent covering the work of senior support staff, 21 per cent covering the work of academic related staff, 15 per cent covering the work of academic staff and 6 per cent covering for technicians. Cut-backs have also led to a number of unfilled vacancies across the sector with 38 per cent reporting an unfilled vacancy in their area and 79 per cent of these saying they covered the additional work that the vacancy had generated. As discussed in the section above, there was little possibility of obtaining additional rewards for the duties as they 'belonged' to someone else or were considered to be only a temporary part of the job. However, as one interviewee put it:

"There always seems to be someone's work to cover – so and so leaves so we divide up those duties until a replacement is finally agreed which can take months. Then someone goes off on maternity leave and lately maternity cover is not usually allowed so we all divide up those jobs. Then someone goes off sick. It goes on and on but none of the cover is seen as permanent so no-one gets paid extra for it. It's really annoying when many of the jobs are in a higher grade. Managers just keep relying on our good will and dedication to the students and our jobs but it's not fair as

people are more or less permanently taking on duties above their grades.”

(Interviewee 22)

Another, a school manager, explained:

“I feel really bad about staff having to keep on covering work but it’s so hard to get replacement staff. Every year we have to make a vacancy saving and often we make this by delaying appointments so when someone leaves we wait a few months before applying for a replacement so I can say to the university that we have made a saving. It’s not just support staff, academic staff often aren’t replaced immediately too but at least I can buy in some session teaching. I’m not allowed to get temporary office staff in anymore so I just have to keep re-assigning duties and telling staff its good experience for them. However, it’s becoming obvious that this good experience is not getting them anywhere and when I now ask for volunteers for other duties the staff aren’t as forthcoming as they were – they are getting fed up of squeezing a bit more work in for no more pay”. (Interviewee 7)

## **8.11 Conclusion**

Chapters 6 and 7 examined how inequality regimes within higher education hindered the progression of administrative and clerical staff who wished to progress. This chapter aimed to examine the result of these processes, namely lower pay and poorer chances of promotion.

The overwhelming conclusion from the chapter was that many respondents felt that their chances of progression was limited with a consequent reduction in their earnings potential. The undervaluation of the skills associated with the occupation was identified

and discussed in Chapter 6 make it very difficult for staff to translate any additional duties they undertake or skills they acquire into pay awards. Inequalities are frequently reinforced as financial constraints are used to justify not paying additional rewards which makes a mockery of equal opportunities. Consequently it is easy for individual's pay to become stagnated and this is clearly demonstrated by the high percentage of administration and administrative staff who are employed in the middle grades, earning between £17,000 and £22,879 (HESA, 2010:Table C). This stagnation is especially a problem for part-time staff as few part-time positions are available on higher grades and part-time workers are frequently perceived as not being as committed to their role as full-time staff. The picture presented from this research reflects the position across the economy. Whilst women working full-time have made gains in terms of pay levels part time workers have not and the pay gap between women working full-time and those working part-time is now 'significantly wider than the gender gap between men and women for full-time work' (Connolly and Gregory, 2007:167). This is of particularly concern for this group of workers whose part-time numbers have increased over the past few years and now account for 39 per cent of all administrative and administrative staff across the sector.

Chapter 7 also identified occupational and vertical segregation within this workgroup and this chapter shows how this segregation can affect pay levels. Occupational structure, including segregation, underpins the gender pay gap (Connolly and Gregory, 2007:166). It has been identified that for every ten percentage points higher the proportion of men working in an occupation, hourly wages are boosted by 1 per cent and the higher the proportion of men in an occupation, the higher the wages (Olsen and Walby, 2004:iv). Pay inequalities, when compared to other staff in the sector, were recognised by the group with a good proportion believing that the role was undervalued as it was seen as a female

role. Additionally, the class position of clerical and administrative staff was also thought to be an factor in explaining pay inequalities. Clearly gender and class bias continues to work to the detriment of this predominantly female workgroup.

There are also unexplained differences in the pay of men and the pay of women within the survey group. Percentage wise, twice as many men as women earned over £26,000 and this could not be explained by length or service or level of qualification. Often men had different job titles to women and were more likely to claim responsibility for staff and resources within their job descriptions. This was identified in Chapter 7 and could partially explain the anomalies in pay between male and female respondents. However, women respondents were also more likely to have childcare responsibilities and to work part-time, or to have worked part-time at some point. These two factors have also been identified as deflating women's wages. For each year of interruptions to employment for childcare and family care hourly wages decrease by 1 per cent and for each year of part-time work they decrease by 1 per cent (Olsen and Walby, 2004:iv).

Pay levels were also influenced by the type of organisation that an individual worked for, with a greater percentage of respondents in post 1992 institutions earning over £26,000. The age of respondents also affected their salaries with older individuals aged 61 years less likely to be in the two highest salary brackets and also a perception amongst older staff that their age was held against them when they applied for promotion. This may have been because older women were less likely to hold degrees or other higher level qualifications as educational factors have been demonstrated to have an effect on wage rates (Olsen and Walby, 2004:13). Younger and more qualified staff appeared less accepting of the status quo and were more likely to be planning to leave their role in order to further their careers.

Promotions and rewards for this group were not easy to achieve. Although most universities had promotions procedures for clerical and administrative staff the implementation of the procedures were largely left to individual line managers with the consequence that promotions very much depended on the view of the manager and, in many cases the resources available. However, managers themselves also expressed frustration at the lack of opportunities for their staff and the difficulties of offering even small financial rewards. Promotion was considerably easier to obtain for those in the higher grades. This leads to a sticky floor within the lower paid grades that many women find it difficult to escape from. Many staff also reported that they had to work additional hours or undertake the work of higher grade staff for no financial compensation. Again, there seems to be a failure on the part of the higher education sector to fully implement equality of pay for this workgroup with a result that a large proportion of employees are all lumped together on two particular grades with little chance of promotion. This is a particular problem for part-time staff who are, in the main, female and whose numbers are growing. This in itself is a serious issue if gender equality is to be achieved across the sector.

## **CHAPTER 9: Conclusions**

### **9.1 Introduction**

The aim of this thesis is to explore clerical and administrative workers - a forgotten workforce - within the British Higher Education System in order to understand and explain the processes that have led to and maintain their disadvantage in terms of pay, conditions and opportunities. The research was promoted by an observation of the frustration of this substantial group of staff over a number of years as they saw themselves side-lined within their organisations and frustrated by the lack of opportunity to progress beyond middle grades. The research examines clerical work in general as an occupation and through an historical analysis of clerical and administrative occupations the thesis shows how the occupation became feminised. It also locates the occupation within the structures of higher education which has been lacking in most other research on equal opportunities within universities.

The research was approached from a feminist point of view as essentially it is a piece of research about women, although men were also included which enabled comparisons to be made. The theoretical framework that underpins the research is the development of gender and class inequalities by the dual influences of patriarchy and capitalism which are then maintained and replicated by inequality regimes. The importance of this research is that it highlights the dual influences of class and gender within the higher education workforce. Universities mirror society in their ordering of roles in a hierarchy that is heavily influenced by the class and gender of their workers. The research is not only important to the workgroup that it concentrates on but has implications for other groups of female workers similarly placed within their organisations' hierarchies. The analytic framework was developed via an analysis of the literature, both historical and contemporary, around

women's labour market position (Chapter 2). The dual influences of capitalism and patriarchy were considered in the early historical development of clerical work (Chapter 4), and analysis of more recent history (Chapter 5) illustrated how the resultant disadvantages were maintained. Where possible the history sections referred to clerical and administrative staff within higher education. However, one weakness of this research was the lack of availability of information about the workforce either historically or currently. Although this gave weight to the initial assertion that the workforce was a forgotten one, this lack of information did hamper the attempts to trace the historical development of the occupation which could have improved the history chapters of the thesis. The occupational segregation of the group was considered in chapter 6 with an analysis on how this segregation effects the valuation of skills. Chapters 7 and 8 looked at how inequalities in a number of areas worked to the disadvantage of the group with the resultant maintenance of the organisational status quo.

This conclusion will draw together the findings of this research with an aim to understand the position of this group of staff today and to consider what conditions might improve the opportunities for many of these workers. The chapter will also consider what further research would be required in order to further enhance the research in this area and to add to the body of evidence produced in this research. The key concept emerging from the research is the segregation of the workforce in a number of ways: by their gender, by their class position within the organisational hierarchy and within trade union organisation. The result of this is a forgotten and generally under-valued workgroup who find themselves side-lined within their organisations by virtue of their class and gender. The continuing failure of universities to acknowledge the contributions made by this group of workers in an increasingly complex higher education environment severely limits the sector's rhetoric of equal opportunities. This is to the disadvantage of both the workers



themselves and to the universities who underutilise a highly skilled and often well qualified group of staff by failing to encourage them to progress to higher positions within their organisations.

## **9.2 Gender segregation and the maintenance of inequalities.**

Class and gender dynamics are apparent both within the development of clerical work as an occupation and also within the history of British Universities. Consequently, history has thrown a double disadvantage at this research group: the development of clerical work into a highly segregated and low-paid occupation from which it has never recovered, and the growth of the universities from a cluster of male dominated, class-ridden organisations from which women were for some time excluded.

The history of clerical work shows how the occupation developed on gender and class lines to the highly segregated occupation that it remains today. Capitalism and patriarchy ensured that women who entered the expanding clerical workforce did so at a disadvantage. The early history chapter (Chapter 4) showed how men and male clerical workers and their unions initially tried to exclude women from the workforce entirely. When they were recruited to the occupation on very different terms to men and were doomed to occupy a distinct group within the clerical labour market (Anderson, 1978:60). These early divisions of labour within the clerical workforce remained consistently stable throughout its history. Research has pointed to the deskilling of the occupation (Braverman, 1974) or proletarianisation (Klingender 1935; Lockwood, 1958), resulting in lower wages and a reduced status of the workforce. However, history suggests that it is important also to take into account the feminisation of the occupation and the subsequent devaluation of the role merely because it is seen as women's work. Men within the

occupation, although relatively small in number, have consistently done better than women in terms of maintaining higher salaries. This was illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5 and is still true today. In 2012 the median gross wages for administrative and related occupations for women was £19,919 compared to £21,952 for men (Office for National Statistics, 2013). This was also the case in this research where 56 per cent of full-time male respondents were in the top two salary brackets compared to only 35 per cent of full-time women and only 15 per cent of part-time women were in the top bracket compared to 31 per cent of men.

The class and gender structures within universities further hinder the occupation's chances. Chapter 1 provided a brief history of education clearly showing how women were excluded from early universities both as staff and students. When they were admitted they were segregated into their own colleges (Bartley 1996:43) and not allowed degrees, for example at Cambridge, until 1948 (Robinson, 2009:xxiii). Women were thus marginalised within higher education at every level. This marginalisation remains today and is illustrated by the relatively small number of female professors, as detailed in Chapter 1.

Although there is little information about early clerical workers within British Universities they appear to have been employed in small numbers in the early Twentieth Century (Gay, 2007:78). At this time they would have been a female minority in a very male dominated and class-ridden environment. Administrative and clerical staff have therefore long been disadvantaged by both their gender and their class position within universities who have a 'long history of status hierarchy' (Eveline, 2004:137). A number of respondents thought that they were seen as inferior to academic staff and not as an inclusive part of the university. Described by Eveline as the 'iron curtain' (Eveline,

2004:138) this longstanding divide is perpetuated by divided workspace and a master-servant relationship where the work of clerical and administrative staff is not appropriately valued as a contribution to the university mission (Eveline, 2004:130). There has also been a persistent tendency to think of equal opportunities as only relevant to academic staff (Castleman and Allen, 1995:69). The status hierarchy was evident in this research with 56 per cent of respondents agreeing that there was a class divide between academic and administrative staff and many made comments about feeling 'inferior and insignificant' when compared to academic staff'. Although many respondents were very positive about the academics with whom they worked, many also felt that within the organisational hierarchy they were often perceived to be a class below the academics and managers of the universities. Although the days are gone when support staff had separate dining arrangements to the academic staff, the use of gendered workspace as identified by Eveline (2004:144) was still evident. Administrative and clerical staff were more likely to work in cramped and public workspaces than were their academic or technical colleagues which further reinforces the segregation of the group within their organisations.

Segregation also occurs within the trade union movement. Records from the 1960s and 1970s show a lack of organisation and a persistent refusal of Vice-Chancellors to include clerical and administrative staff in national pay bargaining. This led to NALGO accusing the Vice-Chancellors of a 'grace and favour attitude' and of 'treating their staff as if they were domestic servants in Victorian households' (Newman, 1982:86). The only consequence of this could have been disadvantage and inequalities when it came to pay levels. Indeed evidence from the time shows dissatisfaction with pay negotiations was one of the main reasons why clerical staff came to unionise. However, early attempts at unionisation were fraught with difficulties. Clerical workers have been notoriously difficult to organise and this is clearly illustrated in the history chapters 4 and 5. Early female clerical workers faced a battle when organising their own unions and exclusion from the

established male trade unions. Clerical and administrative workers within higher education were particularly disadvantaged by the lack of trade unionism, disjointed trade union recognition, lack of collective agreements and a multitude of salary scales. The existing unions, the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff (ASTMS) clearly had no desire to recruit clerical and administrative staff, with ASTMS claiming they were 'not appropriate to their union' and they only wished to recruit 'supervisory grades or administrative staff of equivalent status' (TUC,1971). The AUT, now UCU, also only recruited in the higher or academic support grades, thus leaving clerical and administrative staff excluded from existing bargaining machinery. Clerical and administrative staff were therefore organised by the existing public sector workers, NALGO and NUPE, and also the CAWU (TUC, 1971). Sometimes all three unions organised within one university. Consequently, as well as being segregated from other staff by virtue of their status within the organisational hierarchy, administrative and clerical staff are also segregated from their academic and management colleagues within trade union organisation. The main organising body across higher education is now the University and College Union (UCU). However, this union only organises staff at grade 7 or above, classed as management and specialist or academic related staff. UNISON organises the clerical and administrative staff along with domestic and manual staff. UNISON is a large public sector union that represents a broad range of staff. Clerical and administrative staff within higher education are a very small minority of those represented. Even at branch level difficulties are reported by officials who often struggle to effectively represent diverse groups of staff with few common interests. The issues of the manual staff at institutions are often very different from those of the clerical and administrative staff and the bargaining agenda is often dominated by the academic union. This presents the potential for the issues of the 'minority' union to

become side-lined and can also present problems for all unions across the sector when attempting to coordinate industrial action.

It was not until 1974 that clerical and administrative staff became part of national pay bargaining (Newman, 1982:394). Even then a different salary scale was set up for them that was not as advantageous as that of the technicians (See Chapter 1). In 2006 the National Framework Agreement resulted in a single pay spine which presented real opportunity for equality of pay for administrative and clerical staff. However, this does not appear to have materialised as the majority of staff were merely transferred across from their existing pay point to the nearest corresponding point on the spine, thus replicating any inequalities that already existed.

This class and gender segregation has become entrenched within the higher education system and remains largely unchallenged today. Once sexual division of labour is established it becomes engrained into organisational culture and replicated through the years by interconnecting processes that maintain gendered class relations (Acker, 2006a:109). Gendered divisions of labour remain central to the explanation and understanding of material inequalities between men and women (Crompton, 2007:244). The maintenance of gender and class inequalities within a segregated workforce become legitimised in organisations as acceptable and justifiable (Acker, 2006a:120). These inequalities manifest themselves in a number of ways which ensure that the class and gender status quo is maintained. One of the ways that these inequalities are replicated is in the consistent undervaluation of women's skills. This undervaluation frequently ensures the maintenance of women's inferior position within the organisational hierarchy and this is the focus of the next section.

### **9.3 Organisational hierarchies and the maintenance of inequalities**

'Ideologies that explain why a particular ordering of advantage is natural or desirable often support the legitimacy of inequalities' (Acker, 2006a:120). One of the consequences of this ordering is the undervaluation of skills for those whose workgroup is lower down the organisational hierarchy. Rigid occupational structures support class and gender hierarchies and jobs are defined as bundles of tasks that fit into these hierarchies with 'hidden assumptions about what is appropriate work for particularly socially constructed categories of staff' (Acker, 2006:113). The persistent undervaluation of the range of skills involved in supporting the teaching, research and administration of universities was a key theme that came out of this research. The evaluation of skill is not objective but is a 'socially defined concept and one in which gender is a key concept' (Munro, 1999:97). This was evident within this research where 40 per cent of survey respondents agree with the statement 'female skills such as administrative skills are undervalued by employers' and 38 per cent agreed that their employer's promotion criteria did not recognise their skills. Respondents thought that senior managers often have a stereotyped and old fashioned view of clerical working, thinking it merely consists of typing and photocopying, but this research shows that the staff perform a wide range of duties and frequently cover duties for higher level staff without any recognition. Respondents in this survey referred to being 'lumped together' within grades and no attempt is made at skill differentiation within these grades. The opportunity for regrading on the basis of increasing responsibilities is limited by these organisational hierarchies and evidence was also found of limited opportunities for advancement into other higher grade work as individuals become defined by their roles as 'just a secretary'. The system of academic 'sign off' for many administrative duties adds to the problem as many duties undertaken by clerical and

administrative staff remain the overall responsibility of an academic. It is therefore impossible for individuals to obtain credit for them in monetary terms.

There was also evidence of up-skilling within the roles and this was particularly evident when talking to long serving members of the workforce. Gaille and White reported in 1993 a 'striking rise of the skills requirements in work' (Gaille and White, 1993:ix). Much of this change was attributed to computerisation and technological change, but also the increasing importance of social and communication skills (ibid:28). There was clear evidence in this research of the impact of both technology on the workforce and also the need for increasingly complex communication and social skills, described by Horschild as 'emotional labour' (Horschild, 2003:7).

When interviewees were asked what had changed the most during their careers within the sector, technological change was frequently mentioned. Chapter 4 looked at the debate on the impact of technology on the clerical workforce in the 1980s. Since then technology has advanced swiftly and continues to change at a rapid rate. Typing, once the predominant occupation of female clerks, has all but disappeared as an occupational category. Gone are the days when Professor Callander 'wished for a secretary as he was sick of typing' (Gay, 2007:78). Only 18.7 per cent of the research sample listed 'personal administrative work' as one of the features of their job. 'Keyboarding skills' has replaced traditional typing skills and within higher education most academics would now expect to have to word process their own documents. The predictions of Bevan (1984) and Lane (1989) that word processors would enhance the experience of secretaries by freeing up their time for less routine work appears to have come to fruition. The clerical staff in this research undertook a broad range of duties, including using complex information

technology packages that were frequently changed and updated. Interviewees talked about how they were expected just to 'get on with it' (Interviewee 6). The introduction of complex software packages generally falls on the clerical and administrative staff who are the end users. However, often they are absent from the decision-making processes within their organisations and have no say in the development of technological initiatives which then have to be interpreted 'on the ground' often with little or no training. Evidence from the research suggests that the clerical and administrative staff do indeed 'just get on with it', and frequently become the experts in their area at using packages that may baffle academics and managers. However, like many other duties, this seems to have become just part of the job.

Another area where clear up-skilling has occurred is in the increased requirement for personal and social skills. Frequently it is clerical and administrative staff who hold department teams together following, for example, re-structuring. These human relation skills have been described by Eveline as 'glue work' (Eveline, 2003:138) and require skills such as diplomacy, and good-sense and maturity (interviewee 28) that frequently go unrewarded. In addition, a key focus within higher education over recent years has been the 'student experience'. This manifests itself in a number of ways across the sector, from 24 hour library opening to expectations that students and potential students will be dealt with in a 'customer focused' way. Often it is clerical and administrative staff who are on the front-line, dealing with student demands and acting as gatekeepers for academic and management staff. However, although there is evidence of an increasing need for these personal and social skills they are frequently classed as natural and reflective of the supposed talents of women (Jenson, 1989:151). They therefore go unrecognised making it impossible for individuals to translate an increasing part of their job into monetary rewards. There is every indication that the requirements for social skills or 'emotional



labour' will increase in coming years with increasing competition, and as the public (or students in this case) become used to a high level of customer care (Noon and Blyton, 2007:7). However, a radical change in how these skills are evaluated would be required before the women who predominantly perform them, will see them afforded the formal recognition they deserve.

There was evidence that men, although few in number in this workgroup, both in this survey and nationally, were more likely to earn more. Evidence from previous research strongly suggests that even in female dominated occupations men are frequently able to differentiate their roles on the basis of skill (Pollert, 1981; Munro, 1999; Wilkins, 1998). There is clear evidence that this was also the case within this research group. When analysing job titles men were more likely to describe themselves as assistants or officers, such as 'finance assistant', 'administrative officer' or 'assistant to the director'. Only one male respondent described himself as a secretary and only as a personal assistant (PA). Likewise when listing the components of their jobs 55.9 per cent of women compared to 46.5 per cent of men selected 'dealing with students'. Women were less likely to include financial or staff management and men more likely to stress technical skills. Again, this illustrates the difficulty that women have in gaining acknowledgement for skills that are perceived as being intrinsically female. As the salary differentials between men and women could not be explained by differences in human capital or length of service it can be concluded that this skill differentiation must contribute to men's greater earnings potential.

When looking at skill attributes a further differentiation could be seen between full and part-time workers. Part-time work is another form of gender segregation and is a growing

feature of the British labour market. Evidence also points to an increase in part-time clerical and administrative staff across higher education, as detailed in Chapter 8. However, previous research has also shown that the narrowing of differentials in employment has taken place in full-time work only (Walby, 1997:31). Inequalities between full and part-time work remain significant (ibid:31). Part-time workers in this research could almost be described as in a class of their own, below full-time male and female workers. Part-time workers are particularly vulnerable to the undervaluation of their skills which may be because their work is often seen as marginal (Horrell, Robery and Burchall, 220). Significant differences in their roles, salary and opportunities were identified. Like men, part-time workers were more likely to have different job titles, including receptionist, library assistant and administrative assistant. They were also more likely to list duties such as dealing with students as a key part of their role or routine jobs such as photocopying, arranging catering and shelving books. A very small percentage listed financial or staff management skills. Although the inequalities within part-time work have been long identified, its significant growth over recent years and the high percentage of part-time workers who are female, has massive implications for gender equality.

Universities conform to contemporary patterns of occupational structure where women's skills are under-valued (Noon and Blyton, 2007:139). These skills are frequently institutionalised and consolidated into job evaluation schemes (ibid:139). These organisational structures enable men to protect and differentiate their skills (ibid:139). Consequently, in spite of massive changes in the sector and evidence of up-skilling within clerical and administrative roles, women's skills still appear to be persistently under-valued. This undervaluation remains a stable feature of organisations and makes a contribution to inequalities within the workforce.

## **9.4 Organisational processes and the maintenance of inequalities**

Evidence from this research suggests that gender discrimination is entrenched within the higher education system. Organisational processes maintain and reinforce the gender and class divisions within universities in a variety of ways. Within a highly segregated workforce inequalities often become invisible and are 'taken for granted as common-sense understanding of the way things are, thus enhancing their invisibility' (Acker, 2006:119). This was evident in the research by the apparent lack of consciousness of a number of respondents to their position. Although it was clear that a good proportion of the workgroup had stagnated into the lower grades with limited opportunities for progression, many did not see this disadvantage. There was a clear acceptance of the status quo and a lack of awareness of gender disadvantage. Equal opportunities policies have had a limited effect on the status quo and have suffered from lack of central direction and variable interpretation on the ground. This devolution of equal opportunities policies limits the likelihood of success (Dickens, 1997:287). Clear example could be found of central policies, for example, on flexible working being misinterpreted or ignored at departmental level by intransigent managers who mitigate the inequalities in the interests of maintaining the commitment of the workforce (Acker, 2006a:124).

As well as pay and promotion opportunities, this group of staff are treated differently on a range of issues. Lower-level support staff as a whole are conspicuously absent from the decision-making bodies within universities. For example, representatives from the academic and management community are elected members of Senate in all organisations, but few have an administrative member of staff on their body. Clerical staff are often required to implement strategic management decisions and these decisions often take no account of the implications of the decisions 'on the ground'. This is also true

for academic staff but at least there is often academic representation on a number of university decision-making bodies. This group of staff have none. Clerical and administrative staff are therefore often the invisible workforce, a generally well-qualified and usually very loyal workgroup who lack representation within their organisations.

One of the major conclusions of this study was that the existence of institutional discrimination resulted in an almost childlike treatment of the staff in a number of areas. Acker suggests that inequality regimes across organisations differ in the way in which job requirements and expectation such as working hours, promptness of arrival, attention to work and working overtime are modelled on the image of the full-time male worker (Acker, 2006:114). Many examples were found of unequal treatment compared to other workgroups that had no economic justification but were merely reflective of the workgroup's position in the university hierarchy. This was apparent in the attitude of a number of managers to flexible working arrangements and annual leave which impinged particularly on women with domestic and caring responsibilities. Opportunities for flexible working were extremely variable and there were many instances where, in spite of legislation, women were denied the opportunity to work flexibly in order to manage caring responsibilities. Likewise, there were frequently inequitable arrangements around annual leave and time off for dependent care, both of which impact more on women and which clearly contravene any notion of gender equality. Flexibility was frequently a one-way street whereby staff were often required to work additional hours but were not afforded flexibility to manage their working hours in a way that would suit their domestic circumstances. Lack of access to flexible working was perceived as a problem for the women respondents more than the men making it clearly a gender issue. As women are more likely to have caring responsibilities the attitudes of many managers is lamentable, if not bordering on illegal in some cases. It is most certainly a clear case of discrimination.

Opportunities to combine a career and a family persistently disadvantage women. This is seen most clearly in the growth of part-time work. As more women re-enter the workforce following childbirth they often find themselves with little opportunity to combine their work and domestic commitments unless they work part-time. Part-time workers in this study have already been identified as in a class of their own, particularly disadvantaged and frequently stuck in the lowest positions. Certainly, there are a very small number of jobs in the higher grades that are available on a part-time basis. However, statistics show that part-time jobs are growing whilst the numbers of full-time jobs are shrinking. Opportunities to work part-time only for a limited period while children are young seem to be diminishing, leaving many stuck in low grade part-time work for longer than they had expected.

Acker suggests that the politics of inequality are endemic to organisational restructuring and processes of change (Acker, 2006:127). Certainly evidence was found in the research that this group of staff are an easy target for restructuring and redundancy. This is borne out by the national figures which show a decline in the number of support jobs. A recent headline in the Times Higher Education Supplement reads 'jobs data reveal loss of technical support jobs' (Gibney, 2013:6). The article then goes on to report the loss of 6.2 per cent of technicians since 2009-10 (ibid:6). Later in the report the losses for clerical and administrative staff was reported to be 10.6 per cent, amounting to 1,725 staff. This loss of staff is of concern as the survey identified that 38 per cent of staff worked in an area where there were unfilled vacancies. This was in 2007 so it looks highly likely that this situation has got worse. Re-structuring and re-organisations were also frequently mentioned by the survey respondents and these seem to disproportionately affect the clerical and administrative workforce, many of whom had to reapply for their own jobs. As well as the effects on morale and workloads, redundancies and restructurings create fear, a form of internalised control (Acker, 2006b:484), When organisations are looking to

reduce their labour costs, it is usual for staff to 'keep their heads down' and hope for the best. Consequently, inequality regimes remain unchallenged during these times (Acker, 2006b:460) and the status quo remains.

Women who are part of a highly segregated workforce seem to find it very difficult to progress to other higher-level work. In 1926 Courtney lamented the lack of opportunities for female government clerks to progress, as 'once a typist, always a typist' (Courtney, 1926:142). In 1969 a representative of the clerical staff of Leicester University in a letter to the TUC complained about the lack of promotion opportunities for clerical and administrative staff. The results from this research show that opportunity to progress within and beyond clerical grades is still very limited. Wilkins suggests that 'the influence that gender exerts in employers perceptions of secretaries' career aspirations is significant' (Wilkins, 1998:81) and this would indeed seem to be the case. Clerical and administrative staff frequently find themselves stuck in the middle grades with little or no hope of advancements. Accusations from managers that this is a reflection of choice or lack of ambition was not backed up by the survey evidence which suggested perceptions of a systematic under-investment and lack of interest, on the part of management, in developing or encouraging these staff to progress.

Staff development opportunities were available but were often very job specific which made it difficult to acquire the formal skills necessary for career advancement. Staff development was frequently offered for the benefit of the university and not to assist the individual with career development, for example, training on new IT packages. This specific form of human capital has been identified as less beneficial to individuals who wish to change roles (England et al, 2000:1742) and is therefore of limited benefit for

staff who wish to move to higher level jobs. Access to time and money for staff development again suffered from devolved management, lack of central resources and lack of commitment on the part of organisations to provide a career path for this group of staff.

Opportunity for promotion is frequently based on the needs of the workgroup and limited by the need to maintain organisational hierarchies and grade stability. Hierarchies exist even in the smallest departments which prevent experienced workers from moving into a higher grade, and gender stereotypes of the administrative role seem to prevent staff from moving into different occupations within their organisations. Many respondents reported that even small rewards within grades were difficult to obtain and frequently managed in a different way to those for academic staff. Consequently, clerical and administrative careers are characterised by a difficulty obtaining re-grading or other reward on the basis of skills acquisition, as previously discussed, and a lack of opportunity to apply for higher grade roles.

Opportunities to progress to higher grades were frequently reported as being limited or impossible. The number of management jobs across the sector has grown over recent years from 12,675 in 2004-2005 (Morgan, 2012: TES online) to 16,400 in 2010 (HESA, 2012;Table A. 54 per cent of these posts are held by women (ibid). The increasing sophistication of universities was acknowledged in a study by Doherty and Manfredi who noted that:

“Support staff are invisible both in the statistics and as a matter for investigation and concern. This is a worrying gap in our knowledge since the introduction of a more

managerial approach in universities has created more jobs in functional management/careers and it is important to find out how women are faring in these.” (Doherty and Manfredi, 2006:557).

However, although further research would be required, there seems little evidence that it is clerical and administrative staff who have risen to fill these higher-level positions. Comments suggest that these increases in managerial posts may be a hindrance rather than an opportunity for clerical and administrative staff, with claims that these new management grades had squeezed in above clerical grades making opportunities for promotion even more unlikely. Evidence suggests that the majority of this group of staff are stuck in the middle grades with little hope to progress to even a grade 5 or 6. Given that the workgroup is a generally well-qualified one and given the range of skills and length of experience of many of the staff within the group, this lack of opportunity to progress does not seem logical. Surely it would be better for universities to promote their own staff to higher positions as they already have a comprehensive understanding of the organisation and its operational needs. However, evidence from this research would suggest that this is not the case as assumptions of ability based on gender and class assumptions prevail.

There was some evidence in the study that administrative and clerical staff can progress to management jobs. However, they were all full-time workers and had remained so throughout their careers within the sector. Part-time work has been identified as a ‘sticky floor’ and this certainly seemed to be the case here. There were very few opportunities to undertake part-time work at a level higher than Grade 4. The overwhelming conclusion was that part-time work did not offer the same opportunities as full-time work. It was concentrated in the lower grades, and part-time staff were less likely to apply for



promotion and less likely to succeed when they did. Again, gender and class assumption about the abilities and commitment of part-time workers were endemic across the sector and as the majority of part-time workers are female, these lack of opportunities severely undermine gender equality.

### **9.3 Summary**

Castleman and Allen's study of Australian higher education concluded that:

"It is indeed ironic, if not shameful, that universities, which are devoted to the advancement of knowledge and claim leadership in social and intellectual matters, should have within their midst a group of workers who are often treated in an almost feudal manner and to whose education and career development little attention seems to have been devoted" (Castleman and Allen, 1995:69).

Some eighteen years later, this British study has come to a similar conclusion. Clerical and administrative staff remain a forgotten workforce, by-passed by the equality agenda and disadvantaged in a number of ways by their gender and class position within the organisational hierarchy. No particular form of inequality regimes was identified within higher education. Inequality regimes operate in universities in a very similar way to other organisations as identified by Acker (2006). However, they do appear to be particularly entrenched within higher education and this may be traced back to their origins as male, middle-class institutions (as discussed in Section 2.2 of the Introductory Chapter).

Universities are increasingly complex and business-like organisations that require professional and educated staff to interpret ever-changing education policy and procedures, to operate sophisticated information technology packages and to provide

crucial support to a diverse and more demanding student body. Often it is clerical and administrative staff who provide this essential front-line service with commitment, enthusiasm and a high degree of specialist knowledge and experience that goes largely unrecognised. Although the traditional role of the university secretary as hand maiden to the academic staff has changed beyond recognition, old assumptions based on status hierarchy and gender stereotypes prevail to the disadvantage of both the occupational group and to universities as a whole as they consistently fail to recognise and reward the essential role that this group of staff play in modern universities.

Radical changes across the workforce will be required before gender equality can truly have been achieved. These include the re-evaluation of women's skills and a comprehensive evaluation of roles based on what individuals actually do rather than on the current position of the role in the organisational hierarchy. There also needs to be a re-evaluation of the role and value of part-time work if women are ever going to achieve equality. However, increased pressures for cost-cutting, out-sourcing and wage deflation make this an unlikely scenario. Other smaller changes, however, could enhance the opportunities for this group of workers. Flexible working arrangements could be applied in more consistent manner and managers should be made aware of the potential for gender inequality when refusing requests for flexibility. Part-time jobs should be offered more imaginatively and at higher grades. Again, assumptions on the abilities and commitment of part-time workers need to be dissipated and raised as an inequality issue. A co-ordinated staff development strategy linked to career development could also be a small change with the potential to make a difference. Universities need to stop dismissing inequalities within the group as merely reflective of those in society and start to address them alongside those of other groups of staff.

In order to build upon and enhance this research it would be very useful to look at management and specialist staff across the sector in order to ascertain the number of individuals who were promoted to these posts from clerical and administrative grades. Although some staff have been identified and included in this research who have been promoted to management grades from clerical and administrative grades, the evidence suggests that this is rare. A comprehensive study on the career trajectory of this increasing sector of the higher education workforce would enable definite conclusions to be drawn about the lack of opportunities for clerical and administrative staff to advance into management grades. In addition, the research highlighted that many staff thought their opportunities were limited but seemed to have little idea why. For example, although 61 per cent thought that their pay was unfair, only 22 per cent thought that this was a gender issue and only 17 per cent believed it to be because of the class position of clerical staff. This lack of gender and class consciousness would benefit from further research. Finally, given their more recent history, it may have been logical to summarise that inequality regimes within the post 1992 universities would have been less rigid and entrenched. Although this research was not able to provide a comprehensive comparison between the two types of organisations, the data that was collected suggested very little differences between them in terms of respondents' perceptions of class and gender inequalities. This would also warrant further research.

## Appendix A

## Background Information

1. How old are you?

- ☐ Under 20
- ☐ 21 to 30 years
- ☐ 31 to 40 years
- ☐ 41 to 50 years
- ☐ 51 to 60 years
- ☐ 61 or over

2. Are you

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

3. What is your ethnic origin?

- ☐ White British
- ☐ Other white European
- ☐ White, other
- ☐ Black African
- ☐ Black, other
- ☐ Mixed race
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Other

4. Are you registered disabled?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. Which of the following best describes your household situation?

- ☐ I am the sole earner
- ☐ I am the main earner
- ☐ I am the secondary earner

6. Do you have caring responsibilities?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, for children under 12 years old
- ☐ Yes, for children 12 years and above
- ☐ Yes, for disabled relative
- ☐ Yes, for elderly relative

More than one response can be selected.

7. How long have you worked for your present employer?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 - 5 years
- ☐ 6 - 10 years
- ☐ 11 - 20 years
- ☐ 21 - 30 years
- ☐ 30 years plus

8. What is your job title?

9. Where do you work?

- ☐ Central services
- ☐ Academic School or Department
- ☐ Facilities
- ☐ Faculty office
- ☐ Research centre or institute
- ☐ Other, please specify

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10. What are the main components of your job?

- ☐ Dealing with students
- ☐ Examinations
- ☐ Admissions
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Staff management/supervision
- ☐ Personal secretarial work
- ☐ Undergraduate course administration
- ☐ Postgraduate course administration
- ☐ Research administration
- ☐ Other, please specify

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More than one response can be selected.

11. What type of higher education institute do you work in?

- ☐ Pre 1992 university
- ☐ Post 1992 university (ex polytechnic)
- ☐ Post 1992 university (ex higher education college)
- ☐ Open university

12. If you are prepared to give the name of your organisation, please do so below:

13. Where is your institution located?

- ☐ Scotland
- ☐ Wales
- ☐ Northern Ireland
- ☐ North West England
- ☐ North East England
- ☐ West Midlands
- ☐ East Midlands
- ☐ South West England
- ☐ South East England
- ☐ Greater London

14. What are your working hours?

- ☐ Full-time, 52 weeks of the year
- ☐ Full-time, term time only
- ☐ Part-time, 52 weeks per years
- ☐ Part-time, term time only
- ☐ Other, please specify

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15. How many hours a week do you work?

16. Part-time workers only. Why do you work part-time?

- ☐ To fit work around family or other caring responsibilities
- ☐ You have been unable to obtain full-time work
- ☐ Health reasons
- ☐ To fit in around another job
- ☐ Other, please specify

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17. What type of contract do you have?

- ☐ Permanent
- ☐ Fixed-term
- ☐ Temporary
- ☐ Casual

18. What is your highest qualification?

- ☐ None
- ☐ NVQ or other vocational qualification
- ☐ GCSE/GCE
- ☐ GNVQ
- ☐ A level
- ☐ HND
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Degree
- ☐ Masters degree
- ☐ PhD
- ☐ Other, please specify

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## Pay and Conditions

19. What grade are you?

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20. What is your annual salary before tax?

- ☐ Below £5,000
- ☐ Between £5,001 and £11,000
- ☐ Between £11,001 and £14,000
- ☐ Between £14,001 and £18,000
- ☐ Between £18,001 and £22,000
- ☐ Between £22,001 and £26,000
- ☐ Over £26,000

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21. Do you work more than your contracted hours?

- ☐ Never – please go to question 24
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often

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22. On average, how many additional hours per week do you work?

- ☐ Less than 1 hour
- ☐ 1 to 5 hours
- ☐ 5 – 10 hours
- ☐ 10 hours plus

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23. Are you compensated for these additional hours?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, I am usually paid
- ☐ Yes, I am usually allowed to take time in lieu

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24. Do you have problems managing on your salary?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often

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25. Do you work beyond your job description?

- ☐ Never
  - ☐ Rarely
  - ☐ Sometimes
  - ☐ Often
- 

26. Do you find yourself covering the work of any of the following?

- ☐ Academic staff
- ☐ Academic-related staff
- ☐ Senior support staff
- ☐ Junior support staff
- ☐ Technicians
- ☐ I do not cover any-one else's work

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27. Are there currently any un-filled vacancies in your work area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

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28. If the answer to 27 is 'Yes', are you required to carry out additional duties because of the vacancy?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often

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29. Do you think that clerical staff are paid fairly for what they do when compared with other categories of staff?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

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30. If the answer to 29 is 'No', please give your reasons

- ☐ Clerical work is traditionally a low paid occupation
- ☐ Clerical work does not require a high level of skill or qualification
- ☐ Female skills, such as secretarial skills, are undervalued by employers
- ☐ The trade unions that represent clerical workers are weaker than other trade unions
- ☐ Clerical workers are exploited by their employers because they are predominantly female

- ☐ Clerical workers are exploited by their employers regardless of their gender
- ☐ Clerical work is seen as a working class occupation
- ☐ Other, please specify.....

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More than one response can be selected.

31. Do you think that your terms of employment are as good as other categories of staff?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

32. If the answer to 31 is 'No', in which areas do you feel disadvantaged?

- ☐ Flexible working patterns
- ☐ Annual leave
- ☐ Pension provision
- ☐ Promotion prospects
- ☐ Access to staff development
- ☐ Other

More than one response can be selected.

33. Would you be able to give an example?

### Job Satisfaction

34. The following is a list of statements about your job. Please tick the box that best sums up your experiences in each area.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No opinion/Don't know
I have good access to, and support for,					



additional training.					
I work in a happy and supportive environment.					
I am set clear goals and know what is expected of me.					
I have regular opportunities to discuss my career progression.					
My institution has a good, pro-active appraisal system for clerical staff.					
Students treat me with the same respect as they do their academic colleagues.					
Academic staff treat me with the same respect as they do other academics.					
There is a class divide between clerical staff and academic staff within my organisation.					
My university promotes gender equality for academic staff.					
My university promotes gender equality for clerical staff.					
Clerical staff remain disadvantaged at my university because they are mainly women.					
Senior management are generally unsupportive of the needs of clerical staff.					
Clerical staff seem to bear the brunt in times of cut backs and/or re-organisation.					
There is conflict between my job and my domestic commitments.					
Morale is good within my organisation.					
My job is challenging and rewarding.					
I feel that my job is secure					

35. If you do not feel your job is secure, why?

36. Which of the following apply to you?

- ☐ I am planning to stay in my role for the foreseeable future
- ☐ I am currently seeking another role within my organisation

- ☐ I am currently seeking a job within another higher education institution
- ☐ I am currently seeking to move out of higher education
- ☐ I am looking for a completely different career

37. If you are planning to move out of your role, why?

### Promotion Experiences

38. Have you applied for a promotion or re-grading since working in higher education?

- ☐ Yes, please go to question 40
- ☐ No, please go to question 39

39. Why have you not applied?

- ☐ I am new to the organisation
- ☐ I am content in my role and grade
- ☐ I am discouraged from doing so by my line manager
- ☐ I do not have the confidence
- ☐ Clerical staff within my organisation are discouraged from applying for promotions
- ☐ Other, please specify

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More than one response can be selected.

40. Was your application successful?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

41. Overall, how did you feel about the process?

- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied

42. Have you any other comments on your experiences of the promotions procedures within your organisation?

43. The following contains series of statements. Please tick the box that best sums up your experience within your organisation.

	Strongl y Agree	Agree	Disagre e	Strongl y Disagre e	No opinio n/Don 't know
It is easier for academic staff to obtain promotion than clerical staff.					
It is easier for technical staff to obtain promotion than clerical staff.					
It is easier for academic related staff to obtain promotion than clerical staff.					

It is easier for male clerical workers to obtain promotion than female clerical workers.					
My qualifications and skills are not recognised by my employer's promotions criteria.					
I feel that I am over qualified for the job that I am in.					

### Trade Union Involvement

44. UNISON is the trade union that represents clerical and secretarial staff within higher education. Are you

- ☐ A member of UNISON
- ☐ A non-member who would consider joining
- ☐ A non member who would not consider joining
- ☐ An activist within your branch
- ☐ An activist at regional or national level.

More than one response can be selected (3 maximum).

45. What does UNISON do well within the higher education sector?

- ☐ Represents members within your branch
- ☐ Provides good regional support for key issues
- ☐ Provides good legal support
- ☐ Provides good benefits and incentives, eg insurance, holidays
- ☐ Negotiates nationally for pay and benefits of staff within the sector
- ☐ Publicises key issues for staff within the sector
- ☐ Highlights and supports equal pay claims
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Other, please specify

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More than one response can be selected

46. In which areas do you think UNISON could improve?

- ☐ Support at branch level
- ☐ Regional support
- ☐ Legal benefits
- ☐ Other benefits
- ☐ National negotiations for pay and benefits of staff within the sector
- ☐ Publicising of key issues for staff within the sector
- ☐ Highlighting and supporting equal pay claims
- ☐ Other, please specify

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More than one response can be selected

47. Non members only. Why are you not a member of UNISON?

- ☐ You do not know who to contact to join

- ☐ You have a general objection to trade unions
- ☐ You do not believe UNISON provides adequate representation in the sector
- ☐ You don't think you could afford the subscriptions
- ☐ You have had a negative experience of UNISON in the past
- ☐ Other, please specify

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More than one response can be selected

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48. What is UNISON's top priority for higher education in the future?

- ☐ Pay levels
- ☐ Conditions of service
- ☐ Job security
- ☐ Pensions
- ☐ Parental leave/flexible working
- ☐ Bullying and harassment
- ☐ Equality issues

- ☐ Other, please specify

.....

.....

.....

---

49. If you have any other comments on the issues raised in this study, please give them below.

If you would be willing to be interviewed as part of this research, please leave your contact details below.

Name:

Address:

## Appendix B

Our ref: Jon Richards ☎ 020 7551 1582  
Your ref: [j.richards@unison.co.uk](mailto:j.richards@unison.co.uk)  
When telephoning please ask for:



1 Mabledon Place  
London WC1H 9AJ

Tel: 0845 355 0845

Fax: 020-7551 1252

Text tel: 0800 0 967 968

e-mail: [education@unison.co.uk](mailto:education@unison.co.uk)

[www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk)

June 2007

Dear Colleague,

Please find attached a short questionnaire that we have agreed to circulate on behalf of a researcher, Kay Tong, who is looking at issues relating to admin, clerical and secretarial staff in universities and other Higher Education Institutions, (see her explanatory letter overleaf). We have taken a sample of those registered as working in Higher Education from our membership records and so it is possible that we have picked up some members whose job do not fit into one of these categories – if this is the case for you then apologies.

If you do work in admin, clerical or secretarial grades then we would encourage you to fill in the form and return it in the freepost envelope provided. As you can see from Kay's letter overleaf this will provide her with useful information in an area that has received little coverage before and she has agreed to share the results with UNISON so that we can promote the cause of a much neglected group of workers.

We thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Richards".

Jon Richards  
Senior National Officer  
Higher Education Service Group  
UNISON Education Workforce Unit

## Appendix C



Kay Tong  
Institute of Public Policy and Management  
Room 0.05  
MacKay Building  
Keele University  
Keele  
Staffs  
ST5 5BG  
k.tong@shar.keele.ac.uk

Dear Colleague

I am writing to ask for your assistance with my PhD research into clerical and secretarial staff within the UK Higher Education sector.

I am a member of support staff at Keele University and am undertaking this research part-time, supervised by Dr Carole Thornley. Although there has been quite substantial research on academic staff within the sector, there is virtually no information available on support staff. The aim of my research is to bridge this research gap and to raise awareness of the issues affecting this important staff group. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather background information on staff within this sector of higher education and to begin to build up a picture of the main career obstacles and issues facing the group. This will then form the basis of future research including interviews and possibly focus groups.

The research is supported by UNISON who have distributed the questionnaire nationally. The results of this questionnaire will be shared with them although the primary purpose of the survey is for academic research. However, I can assure you that confidentiality will be strictly maintained at all stages. All data arising from the study will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). Completed questionnaires will be stored in a lock cabinet and electronic data will be password protected. Real names, raw, analysed and demographic data will not be associated with any participant. In addition, any identifying features occurring on the questionnaire will be removed on receipt. You can choose to complete the questionnaire anonymously but if you would be willing to participate in later stages of the research the option is there to do so. The questionnaire can be completed electronically and e-mailed to me at the above e-mail address or posted to me at Keele.



.

If you know of any-one else, either a member or non-member of UNISON, who would be willing to complete the questionnaire I would be very grateful if you would pass a copy on to them. It is essential that I get a substantial number of responses in order to obtain a meaningful picture.

If you have already completed the questionnaire then I thank you and apologise for contacting you again.

Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully

Kay Tong

## Appendix D

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Kay Tong, Institute of Public Policy and Management, Keele University, Keele, Staffs, ST5 5BG

Telephone Number: 01782 584190

E-mail: k.tong@keele.ac.uk

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. This form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

The purposes of this project are:

- 1) to obtain data that will be used as part of a research doctorate on clerical and secretarial staff within the UK higher education system.
- 2) to obtain data that will be used in a report that will be shared with UNISON on the issues affecting this staff group.

The methods to be used to collect information for this study are explained below.

Questionnaires were distributed nationally during the summer of 2007. Participants have identified themselves as willing interviewees by voluntarily completing the section on the questionnaires that asks for contact details of those willing to be interviewed. The interview stage will take the form of semi-structured questions based around the responses given on the questionnaire and a discussion of any other relevant issues relating to the interviewees experiences within the workplace.

All information given is entirely voluntary and should you feel unwilling or unable to answer any of the questions please say so. You are encouraged to ask any questions at any time about the nature of the study and the methods that I am using.

I will use the information given to write a report for UNISON and also as part of my PhD.

I guarantee that the following conditions will be met:

- 1) Your name or the name of your University will not be used at any point of information collection, or in the written case report
- 2) Your participation in this research is voluntary; you have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice, and the information collected and records and reports written will not be used.

Do you grant permission to be quoted directly?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to the terms

Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E

## Interview Schedule

Interviewee number	Job title	Length of service	Grade	Working hours	Gender
1	U/grad administrator	25	5	FT	F
2	School Manager (ex c & s)	26	8	FT	F
3	IT Manager (ex c & s)	17	7	FT	F
4	PA	16	5	FT	F
5	PA	36	5	FT	F
6	Team Leader/Union officer	32	5	FT	F
7	School Manager (ex c & s)	12	7	FT	F
8	School Manager (ex c & s)	18	8	FT	F
9	PG administrator	6	4	PT	F
10	Trainer	8	5	FT	M
11	UG administrator	4	6	FT	F
12	Library assistant	3	3	FT	M
13	Pg administrator	25	6	PT	F

14	Admin assistant	5	3	PT	F
15	Admin assistant	5	3	Pt	F
16	Admissions secretary	5	4	FT	F
17	School secretary	15	4	FT	F
18	Research administrator	3	4	FT	F
19	UG secretary	9	5	PT	F
20	Senior administrator	8	5	PT	F
21	Administrator	25	5	FT	F
22	Business Manager	15	9	FT	m
23	Office Manager/UNISON	5	8	FT	F
24	School Manager	12	8	FT	F
25	Team co-ordinator	1	6	FT	M
26	PG Secretary	7	5	PT	F
27	School administrator	7	3	PT	F
28	Cost Clerk	3	4	PT	F
29	Project	10	4	FT	F

.

	administrator				
30	Disability Advisor	11	5	FT	F

## **Appendix F**



.

PhD on secretarial and clerical staff within higher education  
(Secretarial and clerical)

1. How long have you worked here?
2. Where did you work before? Have you worked outside higher education?
3. What are the main differences?
4. What jobs have you done here?
5. What are the main features of your job?
6. What grade is your job?
7. Do you work full or part-time?
8. Do you choose to work part-time? Why?
9. Do you think that working part-time will hamper your career? Why?
10. What do you think could be done to improve the career prospects of part-time workers?
11. Have you received promotion or regrade?
12. Could you tell me about the process and the outcome?
13. Have you ever applied for a discretionary point, accelerated increment or ex gratia payment?
14. Can you tell me about the process and outcome?
15. What staff development have you undertaken?
16. Was this useful or adequate?
17. What do you think of the staff development for secretarial and clerical staff?
18. How could it be improved?
19. Do you have any problem getting time off for staff development?
20. Is your career progressing as you would have hoped?

- .
21. If not, how do you think career development could be encouraged for secretarial and clerical staff?
  22. What do you think have been the major changes since you came to work here?
  23. Have these had a positive or negative influence on your job/career prospects?
  24. What do you think about the pay and conditions for secretarial and clerical staff?
  25. Do you have flexible working hours?
  26. What do you think about the pay levels for clerical and secretarial staff?
  27. Did you gain much under the framework agreement?
  28. Has your job/work area been subject to re-organisation?
  29. How was this handled?
  30. Are there any unfilled vacancies in your area?
  31. Do you think there is still an academic/support divide?
  32. If yes, how do you think this manifests itself?
  33. Why do you think there are so few men on clerical and admin grades?
  34. How do you find working in such a female dominated area? (men only)
  35. Are you involved in your union at work?
  36. Have you had any dealing with the union?
  37. What was your perception/experience?
  38. What do you think of the trade union representation?
  39. If you could improve one thing about your job, what would it be?

## Appendix G

What is your job title?

- 1 : Office Manager
- 2 : Aim Higher Assistant
- 3 : Administrative Secretary
- 4 : Research administrator
- 5 : Course administrator
- 6 : Administrator
- 7 : Library Assistant
- 8 : Senior Information Assistant
- 9 : IT Support & development officer
- 10 : Admin Assistant
- 11 : Course Administrator
- 12 : Academic support secretary
- 13 : Counter service supervisor
- 14 : Technical services manager
- 15 : Administrator
- 16 : Personal Assistant
- 17 : Administrator
- 18 : Assistant Administrator
- 19 : Administration manager
- 20 : Library Assistant
- 21 : Information assistant
- 22 : Development officer
- 23 : Course administrator
- 24 : Administrator
- 25 : Team leader
- 26 : Assistant Librarian

27 : Administrative officer  
28 : Student advisor  
29 : Management accountant  
30 : Shelf management team leader  
31 : Senior information services assistant  
32 : HR Coordinator  
33 : Assistant Administrator  
34 : Finance & Purchasing Manager  
35 : Library Assistant  
36 : Recruitment administrator  
37 : Library shelving supervisor  
38 : Library Assistant  
39 : Personal Assistant to HOS  
40 : Library Assistant  
41 : Admissions officer  
42 : Disability Advisor  
43 : Not stated  
44 : Senior international assistant  
45 : Receptionist  
46 : Course administrator  
47 : Research skills training assistant  
48 : Administrator  
49 : 4th Year Co-ordinator  
50 : Undergraduate Secretary  
51 : Not stated  
52 : Service support  
53 : Quality assurance administrator

.

54 : Personal secretary

55 : Senior project officer

56 : Jopshop administrator

57 : Course secretary

58 : Deputy Director of Resources and Students

59 : Programme administrator

60 : Receptionist

61 : Purchasing supervisor

62 : Secretariat officer

63 : Not stated

64 : No stated

65 : Information assistant

66 : Student appeals officer

67 : No stated

68 : School Secretary

69 : Secretary

70 : Finance & Database Officer

71 : Not stated2

72 : Supervisor

73 : Complaints & information disclosure officer

74 : Clerical assistant

75 : Library assistant

76 : Assistant accountant

77 : Admin assistant

78 : Project administrator (research)

79 : Not stated

80 : Enquiry Services Specialist

81 : Executive secretary  
82 : Receptionist/admin assistant  
83 : Senior library assistant  
84 : Admin co-ordinator  
85 : Senior Programme assistant  
86 : Payroll & pension assistant  
87 : Personal Assistant  
88 : Weekend services manager  
89 : Finance Assistant  
90 : Information & enquiries officer  
91 : Assistant systems officer  
92 : Receptionist  
93 : Admin assistant  
94 : Admin assistant  
95 : Accounts assistant  
96 : Course administrator  
97 : Course administrator  
98 : Development Officer  
99 : Disability administrator  
100 : Assistant secretary  
101 : Cashier  
102 : Senior IT Officer  
103 : Admin assistant  
104 : Library assistant  
105 : Programme administrator  
106 : Switchboard operator  
107 : Team leader

108 : Library assistant  
109 : Not stated  
110 : Admin assistant  
111 : Marketing assistant  
112 : Purchasing officer  
113 : Secretary  
114 : Reprographic technician  
115 : Project administrator  
116 : Teaching administrator  
117 : Quality admin manager  
118 : Reception manager  
119 : Assessment assistant  
120 : Deputy facilities manager  
121 : Programme administrator  
122 : Secretary  
123 : Not stated  
124 : Senior administrator  
125 : Secretary  
126 : Office Manager  
127 : Finance assistant  
128 : Stores manager  
129 : Accounts clerk  
130 : Faculty tracking support officer  
131 : Bursarian officer  
132 : Nursery secretary  
133 : IT & b relocations co-ordinator  
134 : Training officer



.

135 : Cost clerk

136 : JOB shop co-ordinator

137 : Modern apprenctice

138 : Admin assistant

139 : Finance officer

140 : Not stated

141 : Finance administrator

142 : Curriculum manager

143 : Reference and information assistant

144 : Opera School Assistant

145 : Graduation Officer

146 : Senior Library Assistant

147 : UG Secretary

148 : Personal assistant

149 : Co-ordinator community based teaching

150 : Data management and information officer

151 : Not stated

152 : Submissions manager

153 : Not stated

154 : Senior finance secretary

155 : Office manager

156 : PA

157 : Receptionist/administrator

158 : Secretary

159 : Secretary

160 : PA

161 : Admin assistant

162 : NOT stated

163 : Clerical officer

164 : Secretary

165 : Library assistant

166 : Senior programme administrator

167 : Advise & information assistant

168 : Not stated

169 : PA

170 : Insurance administrator

171 : Clerical assistant

172 : Technical administrator

173 : Secretary

174 : ITT Partnership Manager

175 : Disabilities officer (mental health)

176 : Senior officer

177 : Team assistant

178 : Admin Manager

179 : Admin officer

180 : Administrator

181 : Secretary

182 : Clerical officer

183 : Information advisor

184 : Enquiry assistant

185 : Not stated

186 : Event organiser

187 : Secretary

188 : Senior library assistant

.

190 : Not stated

191 : Group leader (periodicals and acquisitions)

192 : Administrator

193 : PA

194 : Secretary

195 : Senior clerical officer

196 : Undergraduate secretary

197 : Casual library assistant

198 : Admin assistant

199 : Student recruitment manager

200 : Finance cashier

201 : Student finance manager

202 : School partnership administrator

203 : Head of admin services

204 : Information assistant

206 : Admin assistant

209 : Secretary

210 : Receptionist

211 : Administrator

212 : Senior secretary/pa

213 : Assistant administrator

214 : Deputy telecoms/ict support manager

216 : Secretary to Director

217 : Team Leader

218 : Secretarial assistant

219 : Clerical assistant

220 : Finance Assistant

221 : IT and admin assistant  
222 : Archivist  
223 : Receptionist/club administrator  
224 : Information assistant  
225 : Personal assistant  
226 : PA  
227 : Erasmus student administrator  
229 : Year abroad administrator  
230 : Admissions assistant - international  
231 : Quality Administrator  
234 : Senior information officer  
235 : Senior Technical Instructor  
236 : Business Development Manager  
237 : Assistant supervisors student support  
238 : Events co-ordinator  
239 : University assistant  
240 : Service coordinator  
242 : Programme secretary  
243 : Principal technical manager  
245 : Programme co-ordinator  
246 : Clerical assistant/receptionist  
247 : Assistant administrator  
248 : Administrator  
249 : Secretary to senior school administrator  
250 : Administrative assistant  
251 : Secretary  
252 : Records officer - fees

254 : imetable & resources coordinator  
255 : Systems co-ordinator  
256 : Purchasing and finance assistant  
257 : College office team leader  
258 : Library assistant  
260 : Library assistant  
261 : Faculty assistant  
263 : imetabling assistant  
264 : Systems administrator  
267 : Functions booking clerk  
268 : PA  
269 : PA  
270 : IT Support  
271 : Research administrator  
272 : Research centre manager  
273 : Information centre assistant  
274 : Senior library assistant  
275 : Course administrator  
276 : Administrator  
278 : Counter servicesd supervisor  
280 : Technical support assistant  
281 : Data Officer  
282 : Library assistant  
283 : Photography demonstrator  
284 : Advice centre manager  
285 : Library assistant  
286 : Collaboration manager

287 : Exams and confirm officer  
288 : Academic subject librarian  
290 : Business Liaison Officer  
291 : Senior assistant librarian  
292 : Library assistant  
293 : Secretary/administrator  
294 : Service support officer  
295 : PA  
296 : Administrator  
297 : PA  
298 : PA  
300 : Directorate administrator  
301 : Finance administrator  
302 : Assistant student advisor  
304 : Undergraduate admissions secretary  
305 : Administrator  
306 : Senior Information Assistant  
308 : Clerical officer  
310 : Information assistant  
311 : Clerical assistant  
312 : Senior admissions assistant  
313 : Acting faculty registrar  
314 : Administrator  
315 : Secretary  
316 : Secretary  
317 : Administrative secretary  
318 : Academic operations manager

320 : Assistant purchasing officer  
321 : Supervisor  
322 : House Manager  
325 : Library assistant  
326 : Admin assistant  
327 : Assistant Management Accountant  
328 : Online editor/copywriter  
329 : Library assistant  
330 : Course administrator  
331 : Administrator  
332 : Admin assistant  
333 : Senior Secretarial Assistant  
334 : Library assistant  
335 : Principal Learning Officer  
336 : Careers Adviser  
337 : Administrative Assistant/ Reception  
339 : Senior Library Assistant  
340 : Administrative Assistant  
342 : Finance Assistant/ Secretary  
343 : IT Support Officer  
344 : Library Assistant  
345 : Careers Assistant  
346 : Assistant Administrator  
347 : Claims Administrator  
348 : Finance Officer  
349 : Management Accountant  
351 : Senior Admin Asst

353 : Service Desk Co-ordinator  
354 : Senior Administrator  
355 : Secretarial Assistant  
357 : Mailroom Clerk  
358 : International Student Adviser  
360 : Sec Assistant  
362 : Communications Manager  
363 : Information Assistant  
364 : Library Assistant  
365 : Admin secretary  
366 : Purchasing Clerk  
367 : Academic Support Secretary  
368 : Payments assistant  
369 : Team Co-ordinator  
370 : manager, online systems group  
371 : manager, online systems group  
372 : Secretary  
373 : School assistant  
374 : Administrator  
376 : Information assistant  
378 : Information Assistant  
379 : Information Assistant  
380 : Information Assistant  
381 : Administrative assistant  
382 : Administrator  
383 : Assistant administrator  
384 : Course Team Assistant



386 : IT Manager  
387 : Clerical Assistant  
388 : Acting Business Manager  
389 : Admissions Team Leader  
390 : PA/ Professional Secretary  
391 : Senior Library Assistant  
392 : PR & MARKETING oFFICER  
393 : General Secretary  
394 : Shop Supervisor  
395 : Postgraduate Administrator  
396 : Library Assistant  
397 : Management Accountant  
398 : Facilities Manager  
399 : Programme Administrator  
400 : Finance Officer  
401 : Deputy Head of Registry  
402 : Senior Secretary  
403 : Administrator  
404 : Senior Library Assistant  
405 : Research Manager  
406 : Principle Library Assistant  
407 : Subject Co-ordinator  
408 : Information Resource Management Officer  
409 : PA  
410 : Admissions Officer  
411 : Telecoms Tech  
414 : School Registrar

.

415 : Continuing Education Centre Administrator

416 : Administrator

417 : Library Assistant

418 : Accountant

419 : Clerical Officer

420 : Gen Office Administrator

421 : Senior Clerical Assistant

422 : system Development Officer

423 : Secretary

424 : Management Support Co-Ordinator

425 : Secretary

426 : Personal Assistant

427 : Administrator

428 : Academic Representation Administrator

429 : Academic Standards Officer

430 : Manager - Student Finance, Counselling & Health Sces

431 : Photography Technician

432 : School finance officer

433 : Programmes Assistant

434 : Assistant Accountant

435 : p/t Library & Media Asst

436 : Laboratory Manager

437 : Quality Officer

438 : Course Administrator

439 : Admin Assistant

441 : Marketing and Admissions Manager

442 : Research Secretary

443 : Site and Services Supervisor  
448 : Senior Library Assistant  
449 : Senior Computer Operator  
450 : Research Business Finance Post Award Assistant  
451 : Library Assistant  
452 : Dept Office Mgr  
453 : Secretary  
454 : Secretarial assistant  
455 : Admin Assistant  
456 : HR Administrator  
457 : Finance Assistant  
458 : Team Co-ordinator  
459 : Library counter assistant  
460 : Information Manager (admin)  
461 : Secretary  
462 : Secretary to Regional Director  
464 : Research secretary  
465 : Senior Info Advisre  
466 : Departmental Administrator  
467 : Accounts receivable adviser  
468 : Programme assistant  
469 : Finance Technician  
470 : Administrator  
471 : p/t receptionist  
472 : Accounts assistant  
473 : Faculty Officer (research)  
474 : Clerical assistant

476 : Senior Administrative officer  
477 : Admissions secretary  
478 : Sports Duty Officer  
480 : Library Issue Desk Head  
481 : Team Leader  
482 : Senior Information System  
483 : Credit Controller  
484 : Disability and Dyslexia Administrator  
485 : Undergraduate Secretary  
486 : Clerical  
487 : Teaching support assistant/ academic secretary  
488 : Shelver  
489 : Finance assistant  
490 : Corporate Safety adviser  
491 : Telephonist  
492 : Administrative Officer  
493 : finance assistant  
494 : Director, Museums and collections  
495 : Executive Officer  
496 : Senior Admin Assistant  
498 : Administrator  
499 : Research student secretary  
500 : Academic administration manager  
501 : Office services manager  
502 : admin assistant  
503 : co-ordinator  
504 : deput academic registrar

505 : Library Assistant  
506 : Senior personal assistant  
507 : Employer Liaison Officer  
508 : Administrator grade 4  
509 : Subject librarian  
510 : School administrator  
511 : Accounts clerk  
512 : personal assistant  
513 : exams officer  
514 : administrator  
515 : senior administrator  
516 : senior information officer  
517 : pre entry recruitment assistant  
518 : Administrator  
519 : project administrator  
520 : clerical assistant  
521 : senior clerical officer  
522 : library assistant  
524 : secretary  
525 : senior secretariat officer  
526 : administrative assistant  
527 : general assistant -library  
528 : admin officer  
529 : business and contracts manager  
530 : research administrator  
531 : resource list supervisor  
532 : Librarian

534 : information assistant  
535 : senior clerk  
536 : admin assistant  
537 : timetabling officer  
538 : academic liaison officer  
539 : senior information officer  
540 : operations co-ordinator  
542 : senior resources assistant  
543 : information assistant  
544 : senior administrator  
545 : office manager  
547 : assistant registrar  
548 : pa to director  
549 : senior administrative officer  
550 : programme administrator  
551 : admin assistant  
552 : course administrator  
556 : Library assistant (extended hours)  
557 : assistant team leader  
558 : senior finance assistant  
559 : administrator and management support  
560 : senior library assistant  
561 : secretary  
562 : executive assistant  
563 : senior technician  
565 : administration manager  
566 : part time administrator

.

567 : administrative assistant

568 : senior technician

569 : assistant team leader

570 : technical support manager

571 : departmental assistant

572 : call centre clerk

573 : administrator

574 : centre administration

575 : pg co-ordinator

577 : IT administrator

578 : Duty Manager

579 : Equality and Diversity Manager

580 : research officer

581 : administrative assistant

583 : Assembly operation - still comes under secretarial and clerical pay structure

584 : widening participation co-ordinator

585 : programme administrator

586 : consultancy and development co-ordinator

587 : executive officer

588 : medical research secretary

589 : IT team assistant

590 : project officer

591 : joint union administrator

592 : cashier

593 : learning resources assistant CLA co-ordinator

595 : secretary

596 : administrator

597 : Data officer  
598 : marketing officer  
599 : receptionist  
600 : eLearning administrator  
601 : Student Support Officer  
602 : Customer Service  
603 : Careers Information Manager  
604 : Personal Assistant  
605 : Student records officer  
606 : Clerical Assistant  
607 : Admissions Officer  
608 : Library Administrator  
609 : school secretary  
610 : secretarial assistant  
611 : Administrative Assistant  
612 : admin support assistant  
613 : support worker  
614 : administrative assistant  
615 : course co-ordinator  
616 : secretary  
618 : Department administrator  
619 : photocopying assistant  
620 : facilities co-ordinator  
621 : postgraduate administrator  
622 : storekeeper  
623 : Reception Officer  
625 : Secretary (PA)



626 : Admin assistant  
627 : Course Co-ordinator  
629 : Senior Administrative Assistant  
630 : Secretary  
631 : Support Secretary  
632 : Administrator  
633 : Circulation Supervisor (library)  
634 : Curriculum and Assessment Officer  
636 : Secretary/ receptionist  
637 : Departmental Secretary  
639 : Assessments Manager  
640 : Executive Assistant  
641 : Admin assistant  
643 : Library Assistant  
644 : Assessment Administrator  
645 : Programme Co-ordinator  
646 : Research project administrator  
647 : Teaching Administrator  
648 : Senior disability officer  
649 : secretary  
651 : subject support administrator  
653 : administrator  
654 : technical manager  
655 : senior administrator  
656 : secretary  
657 : personal assistant/ administrator  
658 : subject librarian

659 : deputy supervisor counter services  
660 : management development manager  
661 : library assistant and telephonist - 2 part time positions  
662 : performance dept administrator  
663 : secretary/ clerical assistant  
664 : administration assistant  
665 : programmes administrator  
666 : IT technician  
667 : resource assistant  
668 : senior programme asst  
669 : financial support manager  
670 : admin assistant  
671 : admin assistant  
672 : clerical assistant  
673 : Programme administration  
674 : enquiries librarian  
675 : administrative officer  
676 : bibliographic service unit supervisor  
677 : annual fund manager  
678 : assistant to the director  
679 : administrator  
680 : administration assistant  
681 : finance assistant  
682 : programme administrator  
684 : library assistant  
685 : Library assistant  
686 : Resources assistant

687 : Library assistant

688 : Senior assistant administrator

689 : Learning resource centre manager (librarian)

690 : Clerical officer

693 : Senior clerical officer

694 : Senior library assistant

696 : Procurement officer

697 : PA/research division secretary

698 : Head of student recruitment

699 : Services coordinator

700 : Finance assistant

701 : PA

702 : Principal officer, research degrees

703 : Secretary

704 : Course administrator

705 : Administrator

706 : Clerical assistant

707 : Projects manager

708 : Disability advisor

709 : Admin assistant

710 : Purchasing assistant

711 : Research officer

712 : Administrator

713 : Marketing officer

714 : Recruitment officer

715 : Admin assistant

716 : PA to head of school

717 : Secretary  
719 : Administrative assistant  
720 : Administrative officer  
721 : Library assistant  
722 : School Secretary  
723 : Student advisor  
724 : Admin assistant  
725 : Office Manager  
726 : Systems & reporting analyst  
727 : Research student administrator  
728 : Admin assistant/secretary  
729 : Finance Administrator  
730 : Personal assistant  
731 : Clerical assistant  
732 : Centre administrator

.

## Appendix H

## OTHER DUTIES – TOTAL SAMPLE

2 : Liaise with external partners

3 : General office duties

6 : Admin of visual resource centre

9 : IT support and development; training

13 : Library duties

14 : Workshop technical support

18 : Reception duties

22 : Community development

26 : Library work eg enquiry, user education

27 : Project work to support faculty administrators

30 : Stock control

32 : Human resources admin

36 : Recruitment and appointment administration

40 : Ordering & receipting books

44 : Recruiting international students

47 : Setting up of Roberts funded training courses & events for PhD's and post docs

51 : Estates Dept.- maintenance

52 : Maintenance of buildings

55 : Contracts, IPR, knowledge transfer

60 : Switchboard and central management of visitors

62 : Committee administration, student contention, regulation, drafting, legal work

66 : complaints, disciplinary, grievance, appeals

67 : Librarian duties

70 : Alumni database

71 : Marketing

73 : Legal compliance

.

75 : Library duties

77 : Dealing with public as part of library open to public (The women's library), banking and data input

83 : Library duties

91 : Student records, background tables, maintenance

102 : IT Support

104 : Buying and processing library books

106 : Telephony

107 : Project management

108 : Library duties

110 : CPD

111 : Student recruitment

112 : Negotiate contracts; raise purchasing orders

114 : Reprographic work for staff & students

115 : Project administration

116 : Quality issues

118 : Conference admin

120 : Facilities - cleaning, portering, building maintenance

128 : purchasing, stock control

132 : Liaison with other departments

133 : Estates work

134 : Staff training

136 : Payroll

138 : References and records

142 : Timetabling, induction

145 : Preparing transcripts, degree certificates, statement letters

146 : Library focused computer work



.

150 : HESA return, module registration and enrolment

151 : Placing students in schools for voluntary project

152 : Editorial work - dealing with submission papers

153 : Staff IT support

155 : HR issues - contracts, sickness, holiday monitoring

161 : Events, project work, short course aimed at business

162 : Supporting CETL activities/teaching and learning developments

165 : Providing resources to staff and students

168 : Student advice and teaching marking techniques

172 : Management of building, energy management

174 : Initial teacher training placements and partnerships with schools

175 : supporting disabled students esp. those with mental health difficulties

176 : Committee support, corporate governance, planning

179 : quality assurance

180 : registry

182 : Reception

186 : Organising conferences

191 : Periodical acquisition

195 : Awards ceremonies

197 : Cataloguing books and journals, library admin

201 : Administration of student hardship fund

202 : Placing primary PGCE students in to schools

203 : Computing services

208 : Advocating for dyslexic students

211 : members of public requiring legal advice

219 : Vacancy administration, upkeep of information library

221 : Reception, It work, conference admin

.

- 222 : cataloguing
- 223 : admin for sports
- 227 : Administering student exchange
- 229 : Liaison with other universities and institutions abroad
- 236 : Business development, fund raising, project management
- 237 : distance learning UK & overseas students
- 244 : Marketing
- 245 : Setting up course, publicity and marketing
- 248 : Safety
- 249 : Liaising with general public
- 253 : IT and technical support
- 254 : Timetabling for 3 schools
- 255 : Timetabling
- 256 : Purchasing
- 258 : Library work
- 259 : Disabled students issues, diversity and equality
- 260 : Library and information work
- 263 : Timetabling
- 267 : Book catering functions and distribute information to chefs etc.
- 270 : IT Support
- 274 : Journal subscriptions
- 275 : Committee servicing
- 279 : Technical support
- 280 : Loan of equipment, some curriculum support
- 281 : HESA return, student database, training
- 282 : Office admin
- 285 : Handling special material

.

286 : Enrolment, graduation

288 : Library work

290 : Consultancy to business

291 : user education for students, enquiry work with students & staff

293 : External medical/counselling personnel

294 : Car park administration

299 : Telephone services, maintaining the voice network & fault diagnosis

302 : Financial advice to students

305 : Commercial/short courses

306 : Library duties

307 : Reception, postage, accommodation

318 : Organising student induction programme/planning/advice centre

320 : Setting up contracts with suppliers

322 : Audience safety & spend

328 : Website management

329 : Library duties

335 : IT

336 : Advice and guidance on careers to u-g post-grads and graduates from intuition  
(up to 3 yrs. after graduation)

339 : Library Services

344 : Admin work relating to a Resource Centre

356 : Health & Safety

357 : Dealing with internal and external mail

359 : Library work

362 : Voice and data network maintenance & upgrade

364 : Reader Services

366 : Purchasing material, clerical duties

.

- 367 : Support specifically to academic staff members
- 368 : Data entry of invoices, processing payroll stationary etc.
- 369 : Disability student work & team co-ordinator
- 370 : manage IT systems, staff training in IT systems
- 371 : Receiving and logging in journals and associated paperwork
- 374 : statistics/ management information, database administration
- 375 : IT management
- 376 : academic staff - members of the public
- 377 : online searches
- 380 : manning information points and barrier records
- 381 : manage surveys, stats analysis
- 385 : Events co-ordinator
- 386 : IT Support - students and staff
- 390 : HR
- 391 : Library and IT enquiries from staff and students
- 392 : Marketing
- 393 : providing support (clerical) for students and academics
- 394 : Running student Union art shop
- 398 : Building emergencies, first aid, grounds maintenance
- 401 : Corporate Systems Management
- 404 : Library work - cataloguing and classification
- 405 : Policy matters and writing documentation
- 406 : Processing orders/problem solving
- 408 : Administrative
- 411 : Support
- 412 : IT support internally and for UK HEI's
- 415 : Conferences

417 : Handling journals, placing orders

420 : Committee Support

424 : Any aspect of work of dept. in support of management

428 : Servicing meetings, updating academic website for SU, org awards events.  
Liaising with all uni departments for SSLC purposes and updating academic council database

429 : Quality of standards and courses

431 : Admin and maintenance of equipment

434 : Cash

435 : Electronic ordering/ cataloguing of stock

436 : Provide and supervise microscopy facilities for internal and external users

437 : Academic Support

439 : Placement allocation for student nurses

441 : marketing

447 : online work

448 : document supply and copyright

449 : IT, backups, tape management

451 : Dealing with researchers and academics

452 : Budgets

453 : Assist research team/ interviewers

454 : Dealing with other staff

456 : HR

460 : Information management

462 : Union resources

465 : Librarian, systems

467 : debt recovery

471 : dealing with members of the public

475 : Lecturing

.

480 : Library

484 : organising needs assessments for disabled students

486 : Course enquiries

487 : associate lecturer's admin - interviews etc.

488 : shelving returned books

490 : University safety issues and policy making

491 : first point of contact via phone to university

492 : a1m higher tutoring/mentoring/events and student associate scheme

494 : leading museums and collections for UCL

495 : postgraduate and graduation

500 : quality assurance

501 : successful day to day office management (facilities)

502 : ESP short course administrator

504 : quality assurance, conferment's graduations, student satisfaction programme approval, student records, returns (eg HESA)

505 : usual library tasks, queries, shelving

507 : running our job club and organising careers fairs

508 : open days, assessments

515 : student records and clinical placements

516 : teaching information literacy, enquiries, web developments, stock management

519 : project monitoring

520 : overseas exhibitions/ visits

522 : providing library support to staff and students

525 : committee officering

527 : manual handling, using database, library duties

529 : marketing business planning

530 : organising academic conferences, editorial assistant for academic publications

.

531 : resourcing courses

532 : supporting staff teaching and research

533 : promotion and selling of university for conferences

539 : library work- selection and purchase of resources, information skills training, liaison with lecturers

540 : providing business support to students

542 : IT support and training

543 : library - serials administrative management

544 : enterprise and project administration

545 : web administration

547 : regulations

549 : supporting course and partner approval process

553 : web/ print comms

556 : Library circulation work

560 : clerical duties

562 : project management

565 : committee servicing

566 : production of various statistics for whole university

567 : student records

568 : departmental administration

577 : IT support

583 : as above - picking course materials for students so that they can study from home

584 : schools and colleges in south west Somerset, Devon and Cornwall

587 : communication and partnership (all outward facing activity)

589 : general office and clerical work

590 : ad hoc projects

591 : administrator for trade unions

593 : library work and various

597 : data management, staff training, HESA return

598 : marketing courses

600 : database administration and management for the virtual learning environment

603 : Liaise with staff across all functions. Information library.

605 : Quality assurance

608 : Library and library building issues

609 : Ad-hoc administrative work for academic staff

614 : Administration for partner college provision

615 : dealing with staff members in staff development

618 : Liaison with external bodies

619 : produce work for various schools and units, at the university and outside customers

620 : marketing

625 : Support finance/HR group administrator

630 : Business and contracts

632 : General administration

633 : Various library duties

635 : rooming and timetabling

640 : Co-ordination of HOD/ Director of estates' response

641 : conference and admin

643 : cataloguing, stock selection, VDU work

648 : policy and procedure administration, advice and liaison with academic staff

653 : project administration

654 : IT

658 : library stock management, liaising with academic staff, teaching information skills

660 : human resource management



.

661 : shelve books and operate a switchboard

666 : IT support

667 : clerical

671 : quality assurance and academic standards

674 : could tick more than one box due to remits overlap

675 : HR administration

676 : resource and book selection

677 : fundraising from alumni, talking with external partners

678 : diary management, meeting and events organisation, travel, etc.

679 : dealing with landlords, students and employers

684 : assisting students and staff in use of library and library admin

686 : Receipting books & other materials for library stock

687 : Cataloguing, enquiries

689 : Librarianship, teaching info skills

691 : Librarianship

693 : Student records

694 : Library work

697 : PhD admin, seminar admin, website admin

698 : Advising applicants, marketing the school

699 : general maintenance/running of building

702 : Quality assurance, committee support and servicing

707 : Recruitment, widening participation, outreach. Schools & college liaison

710 : Tenders for university

712 : Audio visual facilities, transport administrator

713 : Marketing/recruitment, promotions

714 : Potential students, careers and teachers

719 : Service users and community engagement

722 : Building maintenance, first aid

726 : financial software

731 : Work in relation to graduations

# Appendix I

Other duties- male

- 40 : Ordering & receipting books
- 66 : complaints, disciplinary, grievance, appeals
- 102 : IT Support
- 112 : Negotiate contracts; raise purchasing orders
- 114 : Reprographic work for staff & students
- 128 : purchasing, stock control
- 133 : Estates work
- 151 : Placing students in schools for voluntary project
- 153 : Staff IT support
- 168 : Student advise and teaching marking techniques
- 172 : Management of building, energy management
- 197 : Cataloguing books and journals, library admin
- 201 : Administration of student hardship fund
- 203 : Computing services
- 219 : Vacancy administration, upkeep of information library
- 244 : Marketing
- 253 : IT and technical support
- 263 : Timetabling
- 270 : IT Support
- 281 : HESA return, student database, training
- 322 : Audience safety & spend
- 329 : Library duties
- 335 : IT
- 356 : Health & Safety
- 359 : Library work

.

362 : Voice and data network maintenance & upgrade

366 : Purchasing material, clerical duties

370 : manage IT systems, staff training in IT systems

371 : Receiving and logging in journals and associated paperwork

386 : IT Support - students and staff

392 : Marketing

411 : Support

417 : Handling journals, placing orders

431 : Admin and maintenance of equipment

436 : Provide and supervise microscopy facilities for internal and external users

439 : Placement allocation for student nurses

449 : IT, backups, tape management

501 : successful day to day office management (facilities)

502 : eap short course administrator

504 : quality assurance, conferment's graduations, student satisfaction programme approval, student records, returns (eg HESA)

531 : resourcing courses

553 : web/ print comms

568 : departmental administration

603 : Liaise with staff across all functions. Information library.

619 : produce work for various schools and units, at the university and outside customers

654 : IT

666 : IT support

674 : could tick more than one box due to remits overlap

678 : diary management, meeting and events organisation, travel, etc

689 : Librarianship, teaching info skills

## **Appendix J**

UNIVERSITY GRADING STRUCTURE INCLUDING NATIONALLY AGREED PAY AWARD  
EFFECTIVE FROM 01/08/2012

		51	56,467	
	Grade 10	50	54,826	
		49	53,233	
		48	51,687	
		47	50,186	
		46	48,729	
		45	47,314	Grade 9
		44	45,941	
		43	44,607	
		42	43,312	
		41	42,055	
		40	40,834	
		39	39,649	
***	Grade 8	38	38,522	
		37	37,382	
		36	36,298	
		35	35,244	
		34	34,223	
		33	33,230	
		32	32,267	Grade 7a
		31	31,331	
		30	30,424	Grade 7
Grade 6b = minimum ALC/OR1	Grade 6b	29	29,541	***
		28	28,685	
Grade 6a = min Research 1B	Grade 6a	27	27,854	
		26	27,047	
		25	26,264	
		24	25,504	
	Grade 6	23	24,766	
		22	24,049	
		21	23,352	
		20	22,700	
		19	22,020	
		18	21,383	
		17	20,764	Grade 5
		16	20,172	
		15	19,606	
		14	19,056	
		13	18,523	
	Grade 4	12	18,005	
		11	17,503	
		10	17,014	
		9	16,540	
		8	16,091	
	*removed	7	15,658	*removed
		6	15,303	Grade 3
		5	14,905	
	*removed	4	14,520	
	Grade 2	3	14,202	
		2	13,839	
		1	13,486	Grade 1

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